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Policy mapping:

Women's economic empowerment in Ethiopia



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Women's economic empowerment in Ethiopia

Report by Includovate

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About the Author

Includovate is a research incubator established in 2019. It develops innovative and participatory methodologies to shed light on the root causes of social exclusion and promote change processes that support organizations, sectors, and communities in tackling these challenges. Includovate believes in designing interventions and using research to reshape the social, political, economic, and environmental systems that perpetuate injustice.

About the GrOW East Africa initiative

The Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) East Africa initiative seeks to spur transformative change to advance gender equality in the world of work. It is a partnership between the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Building on the success of the multi-funder GrOW program, GrOW East Africa aims to enhance gender equality and the economic empowerment of marginalized women in five countries of focus: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Uganda. It will foster new in-country knowledge, innovations, and solutions to inform policies and programs addressing unpaid care work, sex segregation in labour markets, and women's employment.

About IDRC

Part of Canada's foreign affairs and development efforts, IDRC invests in knowledge, innovation, and solutions to improve lives and livelihoods in the developing world.

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Cover photo

(iStock) Portrait of an Ethiopian woman living in a village near Bahir Dar town, northern Ethiopia.

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Acronyms

ABCD	Asset-based Community-driven Development	FCA	Federal Cooperatives Agency
AGP	Agricultural Growth Program of the Ministry of Agriculture	FTF VAC	Feed the Future's Value Chain Activities
AGP-LMD	Agricultural Growth Program – Livestock Market Development	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
AGP – AMDe	Agricultural Growth Program – Agribusiness Marketing and Development	GoE	Government of Ethiopia
ANC	Antenatal care	GRAD	Graduation with Resilience to Achieve sustainable Development
ATA	Agricultural Transformation Agency	GrOW	Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women
CARE	Co-operative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere	GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization	HIV/AIDS	Human-Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
DBE	Development Bank of Ethiopia	ICT	Information and Communication Technology
DeFar	Developing Farmers Towards Food and Income Security	IDRC	International Development Research Centre
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)	IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
EDHS	Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey	ILO	International Labour Organization
ENGINE	Empowering the New Generation to Improve Nutrition and Economic opportunities	JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)	JPP	JICA-funded Partnership Program

MDGs	Millennium Development Goals	THM	Transformative Household Methodology
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
MoWCY	Ministry of Women, Children and Youth	UN	United Nations
MoWYCA	Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization	UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
P4P	Purchase for Progress	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
POWER	Promoting Opportunities for Women's Economic Empowerment in Rural Africa	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme	VESA	Village Economic Savings Associations
SAA	Social Analysis and Action	VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
SACCOs	Saving and credit cooperative organizations	W4W	Women for Women
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal	WE-RISE	Women's Empowerment: Improving Resilience, Income and Food Security
SHG	Self-help Group	WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region	WEO	Women's Economic Opportunities
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health	WFP	World Food Programme (UN)
TESFA	Toward Economic and Sexual Reproductive Health Outcomes for Adolescent Girls		

Executive Summary

Ethiopia is one of Africa's fastest growing economies, and recent political and economic reforms recognize the importance of empowering women and increasing their labour force participation. Yet women remain overrepresented in lower-skilled jobs, while carrying out the bulk of unpaid care work.

COVID-19 further challenges the recent gains made by women. The impacts of the pandemic response cut across all areas of women's health and wellbeing—constraining their access to health services and education, and undermining their livelihoods, while increasing their burden of care and domestic labour.

This scoping paper highlights policies, plans, and initiatives related to WEE in Ethiopia. It identifies entry points where further research may strengthen policies, and stakeholders who may champion some of the work going forward.





Key national policies and plans concerning women:

- **National Women's Policy 1993**
- **National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2006**
- **Women's Development Plan 2006**
- **National Action Plan for Harmful Traditional Practices 2013**
- **Women's Development Plan 2017**

Women's status in Ethiopia

Despite the country's recent progress in addressing gender inequalities, and its impressive strides in women's political representation, they remain disadvantaged by underdevelopment in the health sector, by the unequal distribution of unpaid care work, and by disparities in educational attainment and economic opportunities. Labour force participation is higher among men, with 74.2% of women in the labour force compared to 86.5% of men. Women make up less than one-third of skilled workers (32.6%) and just over one-quarter of managers and senior officials (26.5%).

Significantly, women are less likely than men to be paid for their work, and they are underrepresented in labour unions and sectoral associations, which undermines their collective bargaining. More than half of all women engaged in Ethiopia's vital agriculture sector receive no payment, and those who are paid earn less than men.

Women entrepreneurs are hampered by their limited access to finance, business networks, and development services; lack of business management and entrepreneurship skills; and challenges in balancing business with household and family responsibilities.

Unpaid care work which largely falls to women, is essential to the economy. Yet it goes uncounted and unrecognized. The lack of maternity leave and access to child care remains a major constraint for women entering the workforce.

Key policies and plans relevant to WEE

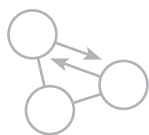
Ethiopia's reform-minded government is fostering an enabling environment for advancing gender equality and WEE. A wide range of women's inclusion policies, laws, and strategies have been implemented to advance WEE and address gender inequalities. Gender is mainstreamed within key national development plans and sector-specific plans for health, education, and industry—reinforced by gender-responsive budgeting and the development of institutional structures for coordinating and monitoring gender mainstreaming. All government institutions are required to address women's issues in policies, laws, and development programs and projects.

Although national policies and plans show a strong commitment to promoting gender equality, there is little data available on gender indicators. Quantitative data providing concrete evidence on gender roles, women's access to assets and resources, and time use are essential for developing appropriate and effective economic and social policies at a national level. The government has committed to carrying out a national time-use survey on unpaid care and domestic work that will inform the planning, budgeting and implementation of public services that can reduce and redistribute the burden of care.

Factors constraining WEE policy implementation



A historical lack of political will and suppression of the nascent women's movement



Poor coordination across agencies and service sectors



A lack of data and studies on policy effectiveness



Failure to address gender norms



A lack of inclusive policy development processes

WEE programs

We identified 25 programs and projects relevant to WEE, of which 19 had sufficient relevance and/or documentation to merit review. The majority focus on rural women and increasing women's access to credit, capital, and financial services. The analysis of program effectiveness is limited by a dearth of evaluations and inconsistent use of the term "empowerment" in those carried out to date.

Many programs that aim to empower women work through existing networks.

Many programs that aim to empower women work through existing networks—either savings and credit organizations (SACCOs) related to registered coops, or community self-help groups. Evaluation of the multi-donor government-led Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment, which works through SACCOs, revealed improvements in women's control and management of household food reserves and their use of technologies and farm inputs. Furthermore, it enabled vulnerable rural women to influence decisions affecting their lives at the household level and to participate in decision-making within rural institutions. They were able to earn their own income, create assets, and change household living standards.

In relation to unpaid care work, two Ethiopian Women Development and Change Packages (2006 and 2017) have focused on increasing technology in rural areas to save women time spent on domestic chores. Yet, women's unpaid labour burden remains a huge impediment to their economic empowerment.

Major weaknesses identified in program evaluations to date



A failure to undertake gender analysis



The exclusion of men from gender equality work



Failure to look beyond women's participation to more substantive signs of empowerment



A lack of clarity on how to measure WEE

Promoting a fair redistribution of care and household work is crucial to ensuring women advance in education, employment, and other key spheres.

Research entry points

There are many areas where research can add value to the WEE landscape in Ethiopia. Action research with policymakers can play a crucial role by emphasizing increased time poverty related to unpaid care work, job market segregation, the lack of adequate social protection and child care, gender-based violence, and social norms. We suggest a series of specific research questions related to women's economic advancement, power and agency, intersectionality and synergies, and operational features of WEE-related programs.

Unpaid care work and labour market segregation are ripe for research. The planned national time-use survey may help to make the value of unpaid care and domestic work more visible, but the gap between evidence and implementation must be bridged. More focus on the participation of men and boys in unpaid labour and in advocating for women's empowerment is also needed. Promoting a fair redistribution of care and household work is crucial to ensuring women advance in education, employment, and other key spheres. Tackling cultural assumptions and gender norms will also be essential to addressing labour market segregation.

Research can play a crucial role in bridging WEE gaps by focusing on:



Women's increased time poverty and unpaid care work



Labour market segregation



Social protection and childcare



Gendered social norms and gender-based violence that undermine women's advancement



1. Introduction



The WEE domains addressed here include:

- unpaid care work
- skills development
- property and assets
- social protection
- collective action
- access to markets
- affirmative action
- decent/quality work

Building on the legacy of the recently concluded Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) program, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), together with the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will fund an action research initiative to advance gender equality in the world of work (GrOW) in East Africa. This new programming will deepen GrOW's body of evidence to support policies and interventions related to women's economic empowerment (WEE), and advance progress toward Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: promoting gender equality. GrOW East Africa aims to enhance gender equality and the economic empowerment of marginalized women by generating new in-country knowledge, innovations, and solutions—developed in partnership with in-country practitioners, government partners, and researchers.

The purpose of this policy-mapping paper is to provide expert input on where GrOW East Africa can add value, who will likely champion some of the work going forward, and opportunities for leveraging relevant policies and initiatives for greater impact in Ethiopia. It provides a baseline for monitoring the progress in implementation of the program. The WEE domains addressed here include: unpaid care work, skills development, property and assets, social protection, collective action, access to markets, affirmative action, and decent/quality work.

Following the section on methodology, the paper paints the landscape of WEE in Ethiopia, and then covers the key existing and planned policies and programs aimed at either directly expanding women's economic opportunities (WEO) and empowerment, or indirectly contributing to them. The programs explored are based upon evaluations completed. It then covers the evidence that exists on these policies and programs, aiming to state, with some rigour, what works, what does not, what is scalable, and what knowledge gaps remain.

Following this is a discussion on the potential value addition of a research program on WEE in Ethiopia, and what innovations—if any—are critical to WEE. The authors identify key building blocks (in terms of policies, programs or interventions) that can lay the foundation for further work and point to useful synergies that can be explored. They also outline key research questions to consider when maximizing uptake in policy and practice circles.



2. Methodology

This desk-based systematic review encompasses both peer-reviewed and secondary/ grey/ unpublished sources to answer the research questions detailed in Figure 1.

Existing policies and programs

To what extent do public, private sector, and/or donor-initiated existing and planned policies, programs, and interventions expand or contribute to WEO and WEE? (including: impact evaluations, empirical evidence of what works or not and what is scalable, knowledge gaps, etc.)

Stakeholders and organizations

To what extent can the key organizations, policy intermediaries, and stakeholders (including private sector actors) working on gender equality and WEE play an important role in linking evidence to policy and/or practice?

Gaps and opportunities

What are the potential research program innovations that will add value to WEE in Ethiopia, and what synergies can be explored?

What are the difficulties of conducting research on WEO and WEE?

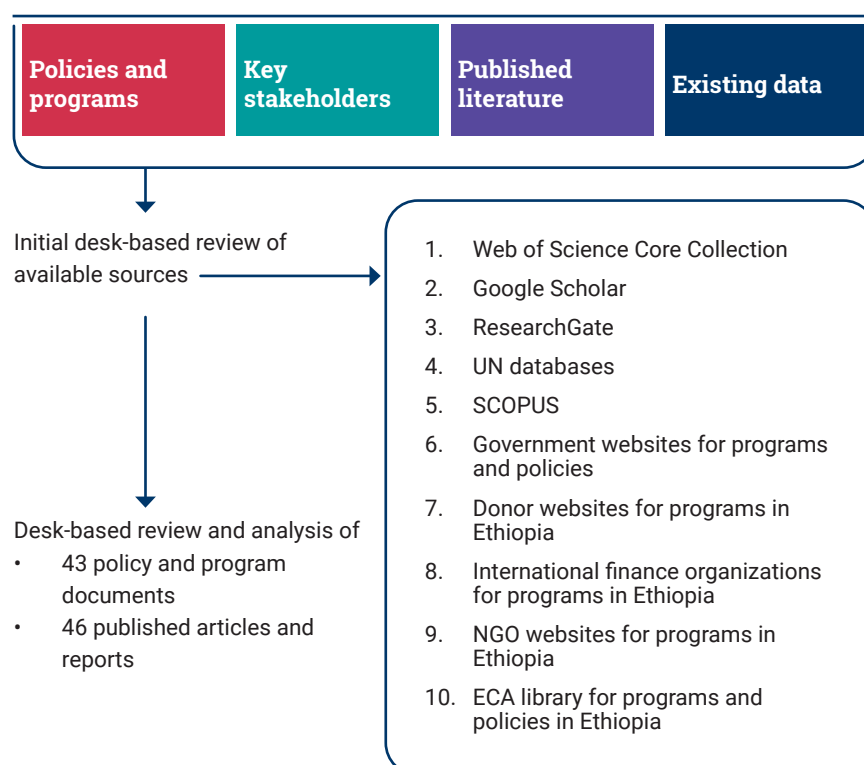
What are the barriers and building blocks to WEE?



A desk-based review of relevant and recent material was conducted to answer the research questions. Priority was given to documents related to gender and / or women's empowerment in Ethiopia, published in the last ten years. Older policy frameworks or legal instruments were included in the review. Only WEE-relevant programs and policies, primarily those that had been evaluated, were included.

The review was split into four parts initially (Figure 1) and regular discussion was held between the review team to make sense of the enormous amount of emerging data. The team collectively established inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and aligned their approach with the review guidelines provided in the terms of reference.

Figure 1: Desk-based review approach



Key search terms were developed collaboratively (Table 1). The second stage was the analysis of the selected literature based on the objectives and the compilation of an annotated bibliography. In addition, the desk review collated baseline indicators and mapped all the available national data on these indicators.

Table 1: Key terms and steps of the review

1	Key terms: Women's economic empowerment (WEE) policies/ programs
2	Key terms combined with geography: WEE policies/ programs in Ethiopia
3	Key terms combined with geography, sectors, and competence/position: WEE AND in Ethiopia AND sectors (agriculture, manufacturing, industries and informal sector and other services), as workers/employees, business owners, leaders/managers
4	Key terms combined with geography, sectors, competence/position and impact: WEE AND in Ethiopia AND various sectors (agriculture, manufacturing, industries, and informal sector and other services), AND positions as workers/employees, business owners, leaders/managers AND impacts such as pay gap both formal and informal sectors (unpaid care)

With regard to policies, laws and regulations, documents that are guiding WEE were selected for analysis. Out of 16 policies, laws, and regulations that were reviewed 12 were selected for further assessment.

The policy and program reviews focused on the key WEE domains mentioned in the terms of reference: unpaid care work, skills development, property and assets, social protection, collective action, access to markets, affirmative action, and decent/ quality work. However, the paper also addresses domains such as self-efficacy and agency, access to finance, and gender norms on mobility and decision-making which were found to be important to WEE.

With regard to policies, laws and regulations, documents that are currently guiding WEE and gender equality across various sectors were selected for further in-depth analysis using specific criteria. Accordingly, out of the 16 policies, laws, and regulations reviewed in the first stage, only 12 were selected for further assessment (Table 2). These policies were reviewed in detail to identify how they are innovative, knowledge-based, and solutions-oriented in addressing the gender inequalities in unpaid care, employment and economic opportunities—influencing the WEE that GrOW is aiming to address.

Table 2: Summary of policies reviewed

National policies	No. of reviewed policies		Selection criteria
	1 st level analysis	2 nd level analysis	
Gender-supportive policies, frameworks, and legislation	5	4	Currently used and implemented policies guiding government, NGOs, donors, and the private sector in empowering women and ensuring gender equality
Economic reform/ national development plans	4	1	Current economic policy/ national development plan guiding women's inclusion in the economic and development sector (for e.g. GTP II)
Sectoral policies	7	7	Currently used as a guideline to mainstream gender in the sectors
Total	16	12	

For programs and projects, there was a focus on end-line evaluations, reports, or impact assessments on WEE programs. However, some programs without evaluations available were included in the review for their relevance to WEE. In total, 19 out of 25 programs found through searching were reviewed and analyzed for this study (Annex 2a).

Limitations

As very few programs have impact evaluations it was difficult to make assessments about what types of interventions have or have not been successful in the Ethiopian context. Similarly, there have been no evaluations of policies regarding women, so the assessment relies upon data triangulation from various sources. Many of the policies and programs had WEE as a sub-component and the evidence linking these sub-components to outcomes and impact was weak, even where an evaluation had been done. Similarly, WEE sub-components were not assessed individually rendering it difficult to draw conclusions about sequencing and the recipe for success. Key informant interviews were planned, to more deeply probe the findings, but COVID-19 has prevented this from occurring. Virtual interviews were attempted but interviewees did not respond in time for the submission of this paper. The study therefore relies upon secondary data and analysis only.



3. The context: women's status in Ethiopia

This section depicts various aspects of women's status in Ethiopia, encompassing their economic, political, and social context, and recent developments relevant to their empowerment.

Ethiopia is rapidly growing, but contends with many development challenges – including a significant gender gap. The country has an average annual growth rate of over 10%, which far exceeds the regional average of 5% (World Bank Group, 2019a). It is the second most populous African nation with 109 million citizens, but per capita income is only US\$790 (World Bank Group, 2019d). In the United Nation's Human Development Report for 2019, Ethiopia ranked 173 out of 189 countries and territories, which is below the sub-Saharan average.



United Nations Gender
Inequality Index:

Ethiopia ranks

123rd

out of

162 countries

(United Nations Development
Programme, 2019)

Gender gaps:

Wage Gap

51%

Income Gap

42%

Skilled workers

32.6%

Women

Managers and
senior officials

26.5%

Women

Female
entrepreneurs

16.5%

Overall, women in Ethiopia experience gender inequalities and economic marginalization with limited access to, and control over, the resources (such as land and services (access to finance, extension, and training) necessary to enhance their ability and capacity to participate in the economy. According to the United Nations Gender Inequality Index, which assesses gender-based inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity, Ethiopia ranks 123rd out of 162 countries (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (2019) ranks Ethiopia higher, at 82nd out of 153 countries and notes that it has closed 70.5% of its gender gap (Table 3). This Index lists Ethiopia as one of the top five most-improved countries overall in 2020.¹ Ethiopia has achieved full parity on its health and survival subindex and has attained the 16th position globally in terms of political empowerment. Despite these remarkable results, women still suffer from underdevelopment in health services. Further, Ethiopia is struggling to progress on gender parity in education and economic opportunities. Investments in human capital are insufficient in general. Labour force participation is skewed towards men, and while wages and income are low overall, gender gaps are still significant (51% and 42% of the wage and income gender gaps respectively are yet to be closed). Women are also a minority among skilled workers (32.6%) and managers and senior officials (26.5%). Despite the fact that legislation does not restrain women from accessing assets, they continue to face challenges, as evidenced in the relatively low number of female entrepreneurs (16.5%).²

Table 3: Ethiopia's Global Gender Gap Index score and its rank in the globe in 2006 and 2020³

Indicators	2006		2020	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Overall Global Gender Gap Index	100	0.595	82	0.705
Economic participation and opportunity index	74	0.568	125	0.568
Educational attainment index	108	0.739	140	0.850
Health and survival index	87	0.969	63	0.976
Political empowerment index	61	0.102	16	0.427

3.1 Political representation and public participation

In terms of women's political empowerment, Ethiopia ranks an impressive 16th globally, following Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's appointment of a woman president in 2018 and a cabinet that approaches gender balance: 47.6% of government ministers are women. Furthermore, a proclamation in 2018 increased the powers and duties of the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth to hold other ministries to account. As a result, women's place in the public and political spheres has advanced greatly with the changing political system.

Various enabling policies have contributed to the overall increase in the

1 Ethiopia, Spain, Mali, Albania, and Mexico have all closed their gender gaps by 3.4 percentage points or more, and they all share a substantial increase in women's presence in political institutions.

2 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf

3 Rank out of 153 countries, score 0.00 = imparity, 1.00 = parity

Political representation:

Female government ministers

47.6%

Female parliamentary seats

38.8%

representation of women in elected office. A quota system introduced by the political party that won the majority of seats in the 2015 elections reserves 30% of parliamentary seats for women. Currently, 38.8% of parliamentary seats are occupied by women. A special campaign by the National Electoral Commission for women candidates, the current ruling party's political will, and a mix of educational and economic policies aimed at empowering women have worked well to bring more women into public office.

Even prior to the reforms of the current government, new spaces had been opening for civil society activism and women's rights activists have taken advantage of the change in political culture (Burgess, 2013). According to Kumar and Quisumbing (2012), changes to Ethiopia's land registration process and reform of the Family Code in 2000 may have had mutually reinforcing effects on women's rights and welfare. Further, awareness-raising campaigns by the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association and other NGOs have also played an important role in improving women's understanding of their rights.

3.2 Women's labour force participation

Women's participation in the labour force of the country has been growing progressively over the years despite persistent gender gaps across all sectors. Female participation in the labour market is 74.2% compared to 86.5% for men (UNDP, 2019).

Women's participation is increasing in the emerging manufacturing-sector, but they still tend to be overrepresented in lower-skilled jobs in production. The gap is more prevalent in high-skilled jobs or traditionally male-dominated sub-sectors. For example, only 10% of chemical engineers and 20% of metal engineers are women (FDRE, 2019). The trend in women's participation in manufacturing shows a high concentration in textile and garment, agro-industry processing, food and beverage, and other limited agro-processed exportable goods. Women are underrepresented in managerial or higher positions in almost all sub-sectors. Similarly, they are also underrepresented in labour unions and sectoral associations, which undermines their collective bargaining. Meanwhile, men tend to be over-represented in skilled jobs, managerial positions, plant and machine operation, assembly, and related roles/occupations. The reasons for these disparities include gender discriminatory norms such as biases about women's leadership role and perceptions that managing manufacturing is "difficult" for women. Laws related to implementation of equal pay for equal work, the absence of a minimum wage and work-place safety standards, an under-developed enterprise culture, inadequate support systems for business, and under-developed markets and infrastructure also play a role.

Women are less likely than men to be paid for their work. For example, in industries like small-scale manufacturing, 58% of female workers are unpaid family workers, compared to 40% of male workers (World Bank Group, 2019b). However, technical support and training programs in different small-scale processing and production sectors have been provided to support women entrepreneurs. Creation of domestic and foreign market linkages, industry input provision support, leasing of capital goods and financial services are all part of the support program.

Women who own their own businesses face more constraints than male business owners. These include limited access to finance, business networks, and development services; a lack of business management and entrepreneurship skills; and challenges in balancing business with household and family responsibilities (Mersha and Sriram, 2019). Consequently, women frequently engage in family-owned businesses. These are typically small or micro businesses, operated by the (usually) male owner with unpaid assistance from female family members, and the sole source of income for the family (Solomon, 2010).

In addition to participating in jobs created through micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, millions of workers have also found employment in regular and mega-development projects undertaken by the government. It is estimated that, under the second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II), 5.5 million new jobs have been created so far, with women taking a considerable share of these job opportunities.

Agriculture makes up 35.8% of Ethiopia's GDP and employs 72.7% of people (Drucza and Tsegaye, 2018). Women make up roughly 40% of workers in the agricultural sector (World Bank Group, 2019b). However, over half of all women engaged in the agricultural sector receive no payment, and when they are paid, they earn less than men (Drucza and Tsegaye, 2018). Female farm managers produce 23.4% less per hectare than male farm managers. Forty-three percent of this gap is explained by differences in the amount of productive inputs used by men and women while 57% is attributed to disadvantages women face, such as unequal access to extension services, longer distances to fields from houses, smaller land size, lack of product diversification, and fewer years of schooling (Aguilar et al., 2014). The failure to recognize the differing roles of men and women, and the inequities between them, poses a serious threat to the effectiveness of Ethiopia's agricultural development agenda (World Bank, 2008).

3.3 The burden of unpaid care

The female-headed household rate in Ethiopia is 26.1% (Central Statistical Agency and Inner City Fund, 2016) with contributing factors including migration of men for employment, high fertility rates among young girls, widowhood, divorce, and separation, among others. Female heads of households face much more difficult conditions than their male counterparts (Solomon, 2010).

26.1%
of households
are female-headed
due to (among other
things):

- migration of men for employment
- high fertility rates among young girls
- widowhood
- divorce, and separation

Household responsibilities is the main reason given for their low labour market engagement.

The main reason given by women for their low level of engagement in the labour market is household responsibilities (Hill and Tsegaye, 2014). Male-female differences in unpaid care work is acute in Ethiopia. On average, women spend 6.45 hours each day on care as a primary activity (the only activity in which a person is engaged during an hour) as compared to 0.29 hours by men. Women also spend more time than men on care as a secondary activity (undertaken alongside another activity). The total number of hours that women spend on care as a primary or secondary activity is significantly higher than for men (9.03 hours vs 0.72 hours). Unpaid care work, while essential to the functioning of the economy, disproportionately falls to women and often goes uncounted and unrecognized.

The lack of maternity leave and access to child care remains a major constraint for women entering the workforce. Despite recent progress in the civil service, maternity leave is still limited in the private sector and public enterprises to 90 days. There is also no provision of day care and workers lack social security. In the private sector (particularly in manufacturing), there is little flexibility in most establishments to accommodate work-life balance for families. The almost complete lack of childcare facilities stands out among the factors that severely affect the working environment. The GoE is working to revise the labour law with a view to improving private sector working conditions.

3.4 Education

In 2016, the most recent year for which data is available, there was a 0.4 percentage point difference (PPD) between boys and girls in school, with a greater number of girls out of school than boys. This compares to a 7.7 PPD in 2000, 1.8 PPD in 2005, and 1.3 PPD in 2011. Over roughly the same time frame, national gender parity in literacy rates for 15-24 year-olds has improved from 0.62 in 2004 to 0.98 in 2017 (with 1 indicating complete parity) (Bolton, 2019).

Maternal deaths
fell by

39%

(between 2011 and 2016)

- Women aged 15 to 49 who received **antenatal care** from a skilled provider **increased from 34% to 62%**
- Use of **modern contraceptives** among married women increased from 27% to 35% and 55% among sexually active unmarried women

The fifth Education Sector Development Program, covering the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20, and the revised gender strategy for the education sector (Gender Equality and Girls Education Strategy), have aimed to eliminate gender barriers in education. The GoE has taken several measures to increase women and girls' access to, retention in, and completion of education, including technical and vocational education and training and skills development programs. These efforts have produced an encouraging overall increase in the enrolment, retention, and completion rate of girls at all levels of education. The Ministry of Education has introduced a gender-sensitive guideline for curriculum development and a specialized course for teacher training colleges, to enhance the gender-responsiveness of teaching and learning. Measures over the past five years have also included increasing access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially in science, technology, engineering, and math. Mathematics and science teachers were given practical training to improve women's and girls' education outcomes in these areas. The Ministry is implementing the second phase of its General Education Quality Improvement Project which aims to improve learning conditions in primary and secondary schools and strengthen educational administration at different levels.

Beginning a few years after the turn of the millennium, the Ethiopian government initiated a fundamental reform of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system and increased enrolment in TVET institutions. The reforms aimed to address critical labour market issues of mismatch between skills set of graduates and the demand articulated from the businesses. Two interrelated aspects of this reform are worth noting. First, the reform set the pace for an outcome-based TVET system, which focuses training on occupational competencies rather than following a traditional curriculum. Another interesting aspect of this reform is that it pledges to provide cooperative training between vocational training institutions and firms as a means of increasing the relevance of training and facilitating the transition from school to work (Yamada et al., 2018). The TVET program in Ethiopia is primarily supply driven. Quality control is provided by a federal TVET agency which the Ministry of Education also oversees. These programs range from informal short-term training courses to formal certificate programs lasting between one and three years. Strengthening vocational training is a top priority as the country seeks to expand its manufacturing sector and advance the employability of Ethiopian youth. However, there are not enough governmental organizations or NGOs in the country helping women in the vocational education sector.

3.5 Reproductive and sexual health care

Under GTP II, the GoE aims to significantly reduce Ethiopia's maternal mortality rate while increasing contraceptive access, antenatal care, post-natal coverage, and deliveries attended by skilled health personnel.

There is evidence of improvements in maternal and child health in recent years: maternal deaths fell by 39% between 2011 and 2016, from 676 to 412 per 100,000 live births. Over the same time frame, the proportion of women aged 15 – 49 in Ethiopia who received antenatal care from a skilled provider increased from 34% to 62%. The use of modern contraceptives increased from 27% to 35% among married women, while the rate among sexually active unmarried women reached 55% (FDRE, 2019a).

Notwithstanding these key achievements in the health sector, there are major gaps and setbacks. HIV prevalence is higher among Ethiopian women. In 2017, they made up 62% of people living with HIV in Ethiopia (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2019). Delays in seeking health care, limited transport to health care centers, and a lack of prompt care at health facilities during obstetric emergencies still contribute to considerable incidents of maternal death. Although 32% of women had at least four ANC visits during their last pregnancy, 37% had no ANC visits. Rural women are more likely to have had no ANC visits compared to urban women (41% vs 10%).

The shortage of skilled care providers affects both rural and urban women—90% of those in rural areas are unable to access a skilled ANC provider vs 58% of those in urban areas (FDRE, 2019a).

3.6 COVID-19 challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts on health and economy sector, and perhaps more so for women. A United Nations (UN) policy brief (2020) warns that the effects of COVID-19 are “exacerbated for women and girls simply by virtue of their sex” across all domains. Thus, it is crucial for governments and private actors to incorporate the gendered effects of the pandemic into their relief action plans. As a first step, the GoE has released a stakeholder engagement plan for COVID-19 response that places women in a vulnerable category and mentions female-headed households in particular.

While the prospect of contracting COVID-19 looms for the whole population, pregnant women have an especially challenging time. News outlets have reported that many expectant mothers in Ethiopia are struggling to reach hospitals to give birth (Marks, 2020). The lack of transportation due to lockdown measures has exacerbated the existing difficulty of access for rural women. While some hospitals have been sending ambulances to women in labour, very few hospitals have the resources to provide this service (Marks, 2020). Additionally, midwives have also complained about a shortage of protective gear such as masks and gloves (UNFPA, 2020). Overall, COVID-19 has discouraged pregnant women from seeking medical attention for antenatal, delivery, and postnatal care services (UNFPA, 2020). Fearing the detrimental effects this could have on the maternal and infant mortality rates, the Ministry of Health has engaged in a mass media campaign to encourage women to call a national health line to get medical advice from a licensed physician.

As part of the effort to contain the spread of COVID-19, GoE had partially shut down federal courts, while continuing to handle urgent cases “including those that affect life, liberty and public safety” (Ethiopian Monitor, 2020). After a UN report that domestic violence is on the rise worldwide, Meaza Ashenafi, Ethiopia’s first female president of the Supreme Court, made the decision to include domestic violence in the court’s urgent classification (Ethiopian Monitor, 2020). This is a timely decision as anecdotal reports of domestic violence are on the rise in a country where 63% of women believe that domestic violence is justified in some instances (Central Statistical Agency and Inner City Fund, 2016). However, federal courts have yet to report whether there has been an increase of domestic violence cases during the pandemic.

As the global economy falters and businesses shut down, millions of women have been laid off (UN, 2020). The most affected sectors in Ethiopia are manufacturing and construction, linked to international markets and global demand, and services in urban areas, mostly in wholesale and retail, tourism (hotels and restaurants), transport and warehousing, and personal services (hair-dressers, beauty salons etc.) (Jobs Creation Commission Ethiopia, 2020). With women accounting for a large percentage of garment workers in Ethiopia (International Labour Organization, 2020), the closing of factories has put thousands of women out of work. Some factories are attempting to manufacture COVID-19 response goods such as masks and hospital gowns, but they have struggled to implement social distancing guidelines and have, themselves, a shortage of protective gear (ILO, 2020). Unless the government can partner with manufacturers and other stakeholders to provide support, factories will be forced to continue to lay off more of their mostly female employees.

COVID-19 may also exacerbate gender gaps. School closures and the burden of care may result in teenage girls never completing their education (UN, 2020). The pandemic recovery process must acknowledge these issues and deal with them swiftly, both from a policy and program standpoint.

COVID-19
may exacerbate
gender gaps

4. Key policies relevant to WEE and gender equality



The Government of Ethiopia (GoE) is strongly committed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and has adopted a number of institutional and policy measures that support these goals.⁴ Gender equality and the empowerment of women are national priorities and positioned at the centre of all policy, legal, and institutional frameworks.

Over the last 15 years, women's economic development has always been mentioned in Ethiopian government policy documents. WEE is understood by the Ethiopian government as economic advancement of women resulting from improved access to resources and services and enhanced leadership roles in various economic sectors of the country (such as in agriculture, industries, manufacturing, civil services, and small business enterprises) through acknowledging and valuing their participation in the economy and enabling and supporting women to equally benefit from the nation's wealth (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2006b).

The five main national policies and plans concerning women are:

- 1993 National Women's Policy
- National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2006
- Women's Development Plan 2006
- National Action Plan for Harmful Traditional Practices 2013
- Women's Development Plan 2017

The National Action Plan for Gender Equality divides WEE into six distinct objectives:

- reducing women's workload (e.g. enhancing women's access to labour-saving technology and know-how,
- redistributing roles between men and women,
- increasing investment in areas that contribute to reduce women's heavy workload (such as water supply, flour mills, energy, food preparation devices, and transportation),
- increasing the involvement of women in economic policy development,
- improving access to resources for urban, rural, and pastoral women, and
- expanding the provision of social protection.

A consistent WEE definition would assist with alignment across policies and plans.

Major national reforms relevant to women's empowerment have occurred since the Women's Affairs Office was first established in 1992, as outlined in the following pages.

4 Annex 1 maps the key policies and programs advancing women's opportunities and economic empowerment in Ethiopia and provides more information on Ethiopia's gender policies at the international, regional, and national level.



Both the GTP II and the second National Human Rights Action Plan prioritize addressing violence against women and girls and provide for measures to eliminate gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices.

4.1 Policy coordination and oversight

In 1992, the first Women's Affairs Office was created within the Office of the Prime Minister to promote gender equality through gender-sensitive legislation. This led to the first ever National Policy on Ethiopian Women in 1993. This policy was bold at the time. It identified 17 implementation strategies to achieve its objectives, the majority of which focused on issues of participation and equality of women. For example, it emphasized women's rights to own property and to benefit from their labour and promoted women's access to basic social services. Some of the implementation strategies included establishing a Department of Women's Affairs in all ministries and government organizations; supporting women's associations; promoting research on lightening women's workload; taking legal measures to ensure equal pay for equal work; and targeting the elimination of prejudices and customary practices that discriminate against women. The policy also referenced the need for basic healthcare and reproductive health information and services.

The Women's Affairs Office was restructured several times after 1992, and upgraded to the ministry level in 2010 with Proclamation No. 691/2010. The Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs (MoWYCA) is legally mandated to coordinate and facilitate government programs and design strategies that allow women to contribute to and benefit from the country's development. Moreover, MoWYCA is mandated to coordinate gender equality efforts across sectors through the gender department established in each ministry. Its organizational structure extends, in different capacities, to all levels of government; region, *woreda*, and *kebele*. While these structures are fundamental to mainstreaming gender, coordination between the gender department and other departments and across levels is often poor. This may be due to a lack of understanding by those organizations on why women's inclusion is relevant to their agenda.

A national coordinating body for preventing and responding to violence against women and children, and pursuing child justice, operates under the auspices of the Federal Attorney General.

4.2 Gender mainstreaming

Gender is mainstreamed within key national development plans such as the Growth and Transformation Plan, and sector-specific plans for health, education and industry—reinforced by gender-responsive budgeting (Proclamation No.970/2016) and the development of institutional structures for coordinating and monitoring gender mainstreaming. Women's empowerment and gender equality are also integrated within the National Human Rights Action Plan.

To strengthen accountability, the government has also issued proclamation No. 1097/2018, which requires all government institutions to address women's issues in policies, laws, and development programs and projects. The ratification of the Maputo Protocol reaffirms the determination of the GoE to intensify its commitments towards the advancement of women in all spheres. Both the GTP II and the second National Human Rights Action Plan prioritize addressing violence against women and girls and provide for measures to eliminate gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices. A specific policy framework introduced in 2017, the Women's Development and Change Strategy, also targets the elimination of violence against women, through programs that protect women and provide necessary services to victims (including legal aid and shelter for victims).

The 2010 gender mainstreaming proclamation mandated all government ministries to mainstream gender. It aimed to ensure all development efforts were geared towards addressing the experiences, needs and priorities of both men and women at all levels, and tackling gender disparities. However, there was very little financial support to build capacity for gender mainstreaming in the ministries.

Gender research and data within government offices and institutions in Ethiopia remain limited to this day.

In 2011, the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (MoWCY)⁵ issued the National Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines to guide ministries in producing sector-specific gender measures and mainstreaming gender into their own plans and projects. In 2012, it produced and distributed the National Gender Training Manual and provided training to various government institutions. That same year, gender-responsive budgeting guidelines were developed to better track and report on budget allocations going towards women. However, the extent to which various sectors are using the guidelines in program monitoring and evaluation needs to be assessed.

In 2018, Prime Minister Abiy Amhed achieved gender balance in cabinet and gave women a number of senior portfolio positions, including the presidency. Proclamation No.1097/2018 on the Definition of Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia mandates MoWCY to hold other Government organs to account on the delivery of gender outcomes.

The 2003 labour proclamation was silent on sexual harassment and gender-based violence within the workplace.

4.3 Women in the workforce

The 2003 labour proclamation created enabling work conditions for women by granting three months maternity leave and emphasising that women were not to be discriminated against in the workplace. While it removed barriers to women entering occupations formerly seen as “men’s work” and addressed the gender pay gap, the policy was silent on sexual harassment and gender-based violence within the workplace.

Labour Proclamation No.1156, issued in 2019, extends maternity leave to 120 days and attempts to curb workplace sexual harassment and sexual violence. To monitor implementation of the labour law, a labour inspection system has been established which asserts the implementation of women’s rights in both private and public sectors covered by the law. A thirteen-year Industrial Strategic Plan (2013-2025) seeks to increase employment opportunities for Ethiopians. The strategy prioritizes labour-intensive, women-dominated sectors, ushering more women into full-time paid jobs. It aims to bring more women not only into low-skilled jobs but also medium- and high-skilled ones.

Those working in productive safety net groups who have infant children are given a chance for “late arrival and early exit”, giving them extra time to take care of their children and housework.

The Urban Productive Safety Net Program is an important package introduced by the GoE with valuable components for women’s workplace rights, including family-work balance. Those working in productive safety net groups who have infant children are given a chance for “late arrival and early exit”, giving them extra time to take care of their children and housework. Lactating mothers can also take up to one year of leave after giving birth, without interrupted income. Moreover, there are mobile childcare centres to care for their babies while they are at work. The Kaizen (factory improvement) pilot program, which aims to improve productivity and safety in industrial jobs through attitudinal change and improvements in work organization, includes gender-responsive measures in its key performance indicators. Thus, gender-friendly accommodations, such as breast feeding and changing rooms, separate toilets, and better health and safety measures, are being progressively integrated by participating companies.

Several legislative and procedural measures have been taken to protect families and women’s rights at work. To mention a few, the GoE enacted new legislation in 2017 (Civil Servants Proclamation No. 1064/2017) that guarantees more favourable working conditions for civil servants, particularly women. Reasserting equal pay for equal work, providing for day care in office spaces, and extending maternity leave

5 In 2010, the ministry was renamed the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs.

About **90%**
of new positions
in the Bole Lemi and
Hawassa industrial
parks were occupied
by **female workers**.

Based on an annual
growth rate of at least
11% in the forthcoming
years, **the industrial
parks are expected to
create 32,000 new jobs
in manufacturing.**

from 90 to 120 days and paternity leave from five to 10 days are among the major developments that support and strengthen the role of mothers in paid full-time work. In urban areas, all government-funded institutions must provide onsite childcare services (Labour Proclamation, No. 1156). Consequently, 56 government institutions, including MoWCY, have started to provide daycare services within their compounds (Ethiopian News Agency, 2018). A 2019 MoWCY report touts the provision of daycare services as an important contribution to supporting working mothers. However, male staff are not allowed to bring their children. Daycare administrators claim this is because the measure is specifically designed to support women in the workplace and promote breastfeeding. The report notes that this reinforces gender stereotypes and perpetuates the burden of unpaid care on women by discouraging men's involvement in childcare (Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth, 2019).

The Jobs Creation Commission in Ethiopia plays a crucial role to foster the business environment and conditions necessary to create jobs. The latest plan of action for job creation 2020-2025 proposes holistic interventions to solve the employment and job creation challenges and provides a new vision of employment in Ethiopia. Currently, job creation is concentrated in large established firms in both the service and manufacturing sectors (though both male dominated sectors). The Ethiopian government also adopted the Micro and Small Enterprise Development Policy and Strategy of 2010/11, implemented through the Micro and Small Enterprises Program. However, the government's support (including that provided through the youth revolving fund) has produced little effect: less than an estimated 3% of the supported micro and small enterprises graduate to become the next-larger-size enterprise (Jobs Creation Commission Ethiopia, 2019).

In the 2017/2018 fiscal year, 133,000 jobs were created in industrial parks across the country with a substantial majority going to women: 89.7% and 90% of new positions in the Bole Lemi and Hawassa industrial parks, for example, were occupied by female workers respectively (FDRE, 2019). Majority of operation workers are girls from rural villages with minimal awareness to industrial/factory working culture (Gonsamo, 2019).

Based on an annual growth rate of at least 11% in the forthcoming years, the industrial parks are expected to create 32,000 new jobs in manufacturing, mostly targeting younger Ethiopians. In general, the Ethiopian textile and apparel sector has shown huge potential and grown to 51% over the last 5-6 years, with employment targets of up to 100,000 by 2020. The majority of employment will consist primarily of women (Gonsamo, 2019).

4.4 Unpaid care work

Women's unpaid care has been addressed from several different angles in Ethiopia. In terms of policy, both Ethiopian Women Development and Change Packages (2006, 2017) focus on increasing technology in rural areas, such as access to electricity and potable water to reduce the time women spend fetching water. GoE has committed to carrying out a national time-use survey on unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) that will be used to "inform the planning, budgeting and implementation of public services that can reduce and redistribute heavy and unequal UCDW" (Oxfam, 2020).

4.5 Women in agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture's (MoA) flagship strategy, Mainstreaming Gender in the Agriculture Sector, acknowledges women's valuable contribution to the sector and the rural economy and provides a road map for achieving gender equality in agriculture and rural development. Ethiopia has a dedicated advisory agency for agriculture—the Agricultural Transformation Agency—which is heavily donor funded. The provision of new agricultural technologies through Farmer Training Centres and

smallholder farmer plots has improved productivity for many rural communities. Among the distributed technologies, some, such as clean fuel cooking stoves and the introduction of green gram cultivation, have targeted activities traditionally dominated by women, such as cooking, dairy processing, poultry rearing, and home gardening. Expanding access to modern technologies, including climate-smart technologies, is one of the major interventions for increasing the agricultural productivity of rural women.

The Women's Development and Change Strategy 2017 focuses on enhancing the economic, political, and social participation of—and benefits to—women in pastoralist and semi-pastoralist areas. The 15-year Pastoralist Community Development Program, currently in its third phase, has integrated multi-dimensional programs that ensure the equal and active participation of women in savings and credit services, improved production schemes in agriculture and animal husbandry, and infrastructure development. While this may appear comprehensive, there are many gaps in assistance to rural women. Men are considered farmers and household heads and this reduces rural women's visibility to state bureaucrats.

47%

increase in
women receiving
certificates of land
and land use rights
in the past 5 years.

Given the constraints on resources for rural women, the MoA has attempted to improve intra-household resource allocation in part through extending women's rights to land ownership. Ethiopia implemented a land administration system that addresses women's marginalization from land holding through a certification scheme that allows them to own land either jointly with their spouse or on their own. Rural women are also highly credit-constrained because they lack collateral for loans. Progress on land ownership has increased the number of women who received certificates of land and land use rights by 47% in the past five years (from 9,492,772 in 2014/15 to 19,869,312 in 2019/20) (National Planning Commission, 2017, 3). The MoA, through its gender-sensitive Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), has attempted to address this and other major challenges facing rural women by creating an enabling environment that involves poor female farmers with financial credit institutions. The aim is to enhance their asset base for better livelihoods.

4.6 Social reforms that have benefited women

In 2005, a new penal code was passed, banning some traditional practices such as female genital mutilation and abduction for marriage after rape. It also further defined gender-based violence. Then in 2006, the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2006-2010) was developed, based upon the Beijing Platform for Action, embracing the latest thinking on gender equality at the time. The first Ethiopian Women Development and Change Package was launched to operationalize the national plan.

Family law revisions in 2000 also enhanced WEE by raising the minimum marriage age for women from 15 years to 18 years, which in turn extended their opportunities for education and economic advancement.

4.7 Barriers to effective policy implementation

Ethiopia has implemented many policies, programs, and laws that influence or contribute to WEE and address gender inequalities. But, while progress has been seen in some areas such as gender balance in the political sphere, women continue to lag in areas such as the economy, and in education and health. The policy and legislative changes outlined above and in Annex 1 have laid a good foundation for gender equality and WEE, while structural reforms and technical guidelines have enabled bureaucrats to understand how to mainstream gender.

Yet results for women have been slow to materialize. The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets for gender equality were not reached.

Clarifying how policies will be implemented to achieve their intended goal **would improve their effectiveness**, as would stronger cross-sectoral coordination on gender.

The government focus remains on advancing women's empowerment through measures such as enhancing their decision-making power, improving access to education, and increasing their presence in public arenas so that they can contribute to the country's growth. In this section, we explore some of the factors that have undermined progress towards WEE.

A lack of sustained advocacy and leadership for women's empowerment

It is difficult to isolate WEE from the nascent national women's movement in Ethiopia. Its focus has been on maintaining an appetite for women's development, which has necessitated a practical, rather than strategic, approach. Some scholars suggest Ethiopia does not in fact have a women's movement (Biseswar, 2008); others describe it as hidden (Burgess, 2013). For Biseswar (2011:222–224), women's lack of leadership for gender equality, along with a mis-association with the term "feminism" and a deliberate distortion of the "women's question" within Ethiopia are seen as inhibiting the building of a women's movement. International conventions such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and regional conventions such as the Maputo Protocol have influenced the positive waves of reforms for women's advancement (Drucza and Rodriguez, 2018). But the reversal of gains (such as the proclamation banning women's rights organizations) has stemmed from domestic and sub-regional politics and the struggle for state control. The enabling or constraining environment for these changes should be studied because despite recent advances towards gender equality and women's development, much more needs to be done in terms of implementation and moving towards a *gender equality agenda* rather than a *women's agenda*.

Within government ministries, the capacity to understand gender, and the authority of the women's affairs directorates/ departments and focal points, remain weak. Due to limited implementation capacity, MoWYCA has failed to coordinate and support all the gender-related programs and interventions implemented across the country. Strong ministries such as the health ministry have had five consecutive Health Sector Development Programs between 1997 and 2015 (Mohr, 2010), compared to only two in the women's ministry over the same period. The country met its health related MDGs (which also focused on women). MoWCY, however, does not have an operational plan for implementing its policies or packages. Clarifying how policies will be implemented to achieve their intended goal would improve their effectiveness, as would stronger cross-sectoral coordination on gender. The Seizing the Moment program, funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and implemented by CARE, is aiming to make monumental changes in MoWCY's capacity to deliver gender-transformative changes.

Other government ministries and organizations face similar capacity gaps when it comes to implementing policies in a gender-sensitive manner. Insufficient budget allocations and capacity gaps (both financial and technical) have proved to be consistent impediments.

Poor coordination across agencies and service sectors

Coordination between policies, programs and interventions is critical to understanding whether a specific policy, program, project or intervention has brought the expected progress towards WEE, gender equality, and gender transformation. Yet, collaboration between policy and program stakeholders is rare. The differences among stakeholders need to be bridged so that practice can inform policy and vice versa.

Revising the 1993 National Women Policy

Includovate is reviewing the 1993 Ethiopian National Women Policy as part of the DFID-funded Seizing the Moment project. The project, commissioned by CARE Ethiopia and the Ministry of Women Children and Youth (MoWCY), aims to capitalize on the dynamic current political developments in Ethiopia and CARE Ethiopia's in-country expertise on gender-transformative work to strengthen the capacity of MoWCY. The review is part of the first phase of the project, during which direct systems-strengthening support will be provided to MoWCY so that it can better support and hold other ministries to account in delivering gender-transformative outcomes.

This is timely given recent developments, such as the 2018 introduction of Proclamation No.1097 on the Definition of Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, which expanded the powers and duties of the Ministry. The current policy is out of date and not aligned with the SDGs and other international and regional gender commitments. Among others, a revised National Women Policy and Action Plan is expected to address issues such as constitutional and institutional arrangements; human rights and legal regulatory instruments; and gender equality in economic sectors, economic infrastructure, social sector development, capacity building, good governance, human development and technology, and in building a democratic system.

A lack of data and studies on policy effectiveness

There has generally been a lack of critical assessment of policy effectiveness and impact to guide subsequent revisions. For example, the 1993 National Policy on Ethiopian Women has guided gender-related work for almost three decades without ever being critically assessed and revised. A MoWYCA technical committee undertook a gender gap assessment as part of developing the National Action Plan for Gender Equality in 2006 (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2006b), but a full evaluation of the policy was not undertaken until 2020. As part of the Seizing the Moment project, [Includovate](#) has been contracted to review this policy and complete a nationwide consultation process (Box on the left here). Where data exists, it shows there is a link between policy changes and women's empowerment. The 1997 Micro and Small Entrepreneurship Development Strategy and initiatives developed by Ministry of Finance and Economic Development helped women to increase their income, and improve their asset base (Haile et al., 2012). The revision of the 2000 family law was studied and showed promise in shifting norms in marriage, childbearing, and asset ownership (Kumar and Quisumbing, 2012). The same study also indicates the mutually reinforcing positive effects of the 2000 revised family law and the community-based land registration on women's rights and welfare. More studies like this are needed to help us better understand how policies can impact WEE. The health ministry has more readily assessed the gaps that hamper the implementation and effectiveness of health policies in a gender-responsive manner. These evidence-based policy planning and evaluation examples have not influenced the behaviour of the resource-poor MoWCY, however.

The 1994 Education and Training Policy indicated the need for affirmative actions to increase women's and girls' enrolment in school. Lowering the pass mark for women and girls for university entrance is one of the examples that has had a positive impact on increasing their enrolment in secondary schools. The quality of education is still an issue. The Ethiopian Institute of Agriculture Research (EIAR) uses affirmative action in the hiring process to recruit more women into the organization. A gender audit discovered that women are required to have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75, while men need 3.0. The audit also stated that female applicants receive an additional three points on the final score of their recruitment exam to give them a slight advantage (Drucza et al., 2018). Female-only exams have been used by the Ministry of Finance and EIAR to bring more women into the organization. Yet, EIAR only increased their female employment rate by 4.5%

The quality of education is still an issue. The Ethiopian Institute of Agriculture Research (EIAR) only increased their female employment rate by 4.5% in twelve years of affirmative action measures.

The lack of assessment and evaluation of policies results in a dearth of documentation on their effectiveness.

in twelve years of affirmative action measures. Drucza et al. (2018) suggest that setting targets is not enough without demonstrated leadership, as the Government's affirmative action provisions have been ignored or slow to achieve results.

The lack of assessment and evaluation of policies results in a dearth of documentation on their effectiveness. This leaves policy changes and decisions exposed to political will. Using standardized WEE indicators and employing appropriate evaluation methods will help to better identify the policy and program gaps.

Failure to address gender norms

Traditional norms that shape the roles and position of women in society undermine progress. Moreover, the political appetite to advance gender gains ebbs and flows as reforms are won and then conceded (Drucza et al., 2019). This creates uneven progress. Policy documents and academic papers repeatedly refer to a failure to address existing gender norms and stereotypes. People conform to entrenched social norms to achieve recognition and status, or to avoid local social sanctions regardless of what national policies purport. As a result, some policies work to further increase women's workloads, reducing their leisure time and threatening their effectiveness in the economic sectors (Haile et al., 2012). This suggests that there is a need to employ socio-culturally-sensitive methods and gender-transformative interventions along with policies to mitigate the negative impact of policies that could further marginalize women. This could include providing daycare service in the workplace, promoting time- and energy-saving technologies for household chores, and encouraging men to share household responsibilities.

Policies aimed at increasing the economic empowerment of women can also have unintended consequences if gender-transformative criteria are not considered. For example, using women health extension workers to expand women's access to health services, as part of the Health Sector Development Programs that accompanied the 1994 health policies, was also found to be gender exploitative (Jackson et al., 2018). Female health extension workers are paid much less than their male counterparts; they have poor working conditions, limited training opportunities, and very little agency in the health system. The programs reinforced traditional gender roles by assuming that women are inherently caring.

A lack of inclusive policy development processes

National policy development processes have typically been approached in a top-down fashion that fails to recognize substantial variations in needs across regions. This leads to resistance in implementing policies. Ethiopia has a diverse culture. Experiences and challenges relating to women's disempowerment and gender inequality vary across the country. Current policies should take into account these regional nuances to create ownership for implementation. More inclusive policy dialogue would also provide an opportunity to reach across sectors, and involve key stakeholders. Many organizations working on WEE in Ethiopia, including CSOs, are sidelined from influencing policy.

Men too have been excluded, despite the fact that their involvement in WEE efforts is paramount for the effective implementation of policies and programs. Assessment of the rollout of the 2012 Gender Responsive Budgeting Guidelines showed that much of the training was given to women staff despite men being the higher-level decision-makers in most cases.

5. WEE programs in Ethiopia



Several projects in Ethiopia aim to enhance WEE or opportunities (Annex 2b). This review mainly focused on end line evaluations, reports, or impact assessment on WEE programs in Ethiopia. However, some projects and programs that did not have evaluations available were included in the review for their relevance to WEE.

In total, 19 out of 25 programs/projects were reviewed and analysed for this study. But project evaluations using the term “empowerment” do so loosely to describe any outcome for women. In fact, the former Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria used for program evaluations did not effectively cover gender, representing a missed opportunity for learning. Assessment of WEE has not been done according to any consistent measures, as is evident in the evaluations of the following projects and programs:

- Women Empowerment Project (JPP1)
- Promoting Crop Diversification and Improved Agricultural Technologies Project (JPP2)
- Promoting Women's Economic Leadership in Market-Oriented Agriculture
- Strengthening Ethiopian Agricultural Extension System Project
- Agricultural Growth Program – Livestock Market Development (AGP-LMD) Project
- Empowering New Generations to Improve Nutrition and Economic Opportunities (ENGINE).

Empowerment has become a development buzzword with little rigorous, well-defined meaning. As an illustration, Table 4 documents the various tools and indicators used to measure WEE in select programs, and the evidence found of their effectiveness.

Table 4: Evidence of WEE effectiveness of selected programs

Programs/Policies	Tools and indicators used to measure WEE	Evidence of effectiveness
Toward Economic and Sexual Reproductive Health Outcomes for Adolescent Girls (TESFA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economic empowerment (EE) curriculum + Social analysis & action (SAA) 2. Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) curriculum + SAA 3. Combine (EE+SRH) + SAA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TESFA reached 5,000 adolescent girls in south Gondar to achieve “measurable positive change in their economic empowerment (EE) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) status”.
Facilitating Access to Financial Services for Women Beekeepers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women's ability to make decisions and influence 2. Self-perception 3. Personal freedom 4. Access to and control over resources 5. Support from social networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a clear impact on the empowerment of those women directly related to the project activities: respondents' personal savings, and participation in community groups. • There are some indications of an impact in other areas, including women's involvement in household-management decisions, attitudes towards gender rights (particularly among female-headed households), control over assets, having the freedom to travel and participate in community activities, and taking up leadership positions in community groups. • However, in each of these cases the evidence for an effect from the project is not strong.
WE-RISE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Five domains of empowerment (production, resources, income, leadership, and autonomy) 2. Gender parity 3. Social analysis and action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are increasingly expressing a degree of economic empowerment but lag in their social, cultural, or political empowerment, although economic production roles remain stubbornly unchanged during the short life of, WE RISE. • VSLA activities have undoubtedly contributed to women's increased participation in household income and expenditure decision-making, the only empowerment domain indicator to show a dramatic increase over the life of the project.

ABDISHE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agency 2. Structure 3. Relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has been highly relevant to the pressing needs of the poor households and chronically food insecure women as well as the broader policies and strategies of the country. • It has also been effective in creating access to and control over resources by the poor women though confronting the deep-rooted male-female relationship that has been detrimental to any development intervention.
POWER/PROFIR Africa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CARE's Gender Equality Framework (a multi-faceted approach to tackling systemic gender inequalities in agency, relations, and structure) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POWER/PROFIR adequately addresses building agency and changing relations, primarily through the VSLA model. • More attention is needed to challenging structures. The project needs to ensure robust gender assessment at the end of program to review changes in relations and structure.
Women for Women (W4W)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % of women who can equally participate in household financial decision-making 2. % of women actively using financial services 3. % of women with union, women's group, or cooperative membership through which they can voice their labour rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project was found to have brought about a significant change in the lives of thousands of women and satisfied most of the stakeholders involved in the project.

In terms of reach, the Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative reached 31 farmers' organizations and over one million members, of which 11% were women (WFP, 2014b). TESFA reached over 5000 ever-married adolescent girls (ages 14-19) (Edmeades and Hayes, 2014). Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development (GRAD) created 2,861 VESAs with 20 members each (CARE, N.D.b). The Agricultural Growth Program – Agribusiness Marketing and Development Project (AMDe) reached one million farmers (Agricultural Cooperatives Development International/Volunteer Oversees Cooperatives Assistance, 2016). ENGINE operated in 100 *woredas* (administrative regions) consisting of 83 Agricultural Growth Program zones and 17 food insecure zones, in the Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regions (SNNPR). WE-RISE targeted 15,441 households in three *woredas* in the Sidama zone of SNNPR, just south of the regional city of Hawassa; the project had actually counted approximately 10,950 participating households by December 2015 (TANGO, 2016). ABDISHE ("her hope") project reached 6,400 chronically food insecure women and their households (Teruneh Zenna Business and Management Consultancy, 2016). The W4W project organized women into 182 VSLAs and six Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs), linked them to financial services, and involved them in business plan competitions with capital granted to the winners. The project has played a key role in improving women's access to formal and informal financial services (CARE Ethiopia, 2018).

Ethiopia's PSNP,
launched in 2005, is
one of the largest
national social safety
net programs in
Africa, with a budget
of approximately
USD 650
million
per year.

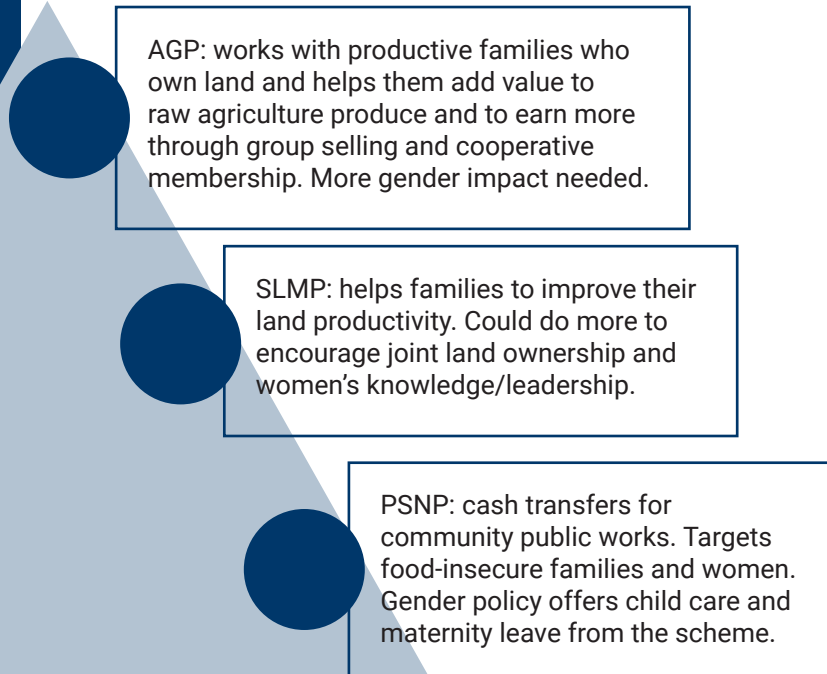
There are a few government-led, multi-donor programs with a WEE or a WEO component. Those in the agriculture sector include the Agricultural Growth Program (AGP), the Sustainable Land Management Program (SLMP), and the Productive Safety Net Programme (Figure 2). The AGP (2011-2017) works with common interest groups (such as local communities or farmer groups) and promotes agri-business and market linkages. It has had a gender audit and analysis recently completed (unpublished) to highlight the weaknesses in its approach. SLMP works to restore degraded land but has largely been gender-blind. With more productive land, women could engage in more enterprises and sell surplus produce. Ethiopia's PSNP, launched in 2005, is one of the largest national social safety net programs in Africa, with a budget of approximately USD 650 million per year. It is a development-oriented workfare program that operates in seven of the most drought-prone regions, benefiting at least eight million people. The PSNP heavily targets women and has a gender strategy that includes offering

childcare, nutrition awareness, and maternity assistance. The next phase of PSNP is currently being designed by the Ministry of Agriculture.

These three programs can be explained in the form of a pyramid. At the base is the PSNP, which aims to enable the rural poor facing chronic food insecurity to resist shocks, create assets, and become food self-sufficient. A level higher is the SLMP, which targets smallholder farmers and has involved 301,354 beneficiaries (of which 41% were women) in income-generating activities. At the top is the AGP, whose primary beneficiaries include small- and medium-scale farmers in selected *woredas*, including those in common interest groups, primary cooperatives, and irrigation water user associations. AGP II, which began in 2015, is aligned with GTP II, thereby contributing to the achievement of targets set for agricultural growth.

Figure 2: The main multi-donor agriculture programs

The Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment is implemented by



AGP: works with productive families who own land and helps them add value to raw agriculture produce and to earn more through group selling and cooperative membership. More gender impact needed.

SLMP: helps families to improve their land productivity. Could do more to encourage joint land ownership and women's knowledge/leadership.

PSNP: cash transfers for community public works. Targets food-insecure families and women. Gender policy offers child care and maternity leave from the scheme.

the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, the Federal Cooperatives Agency (FCA), the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation and their district level line offices in Afar and Oromia in collaboration with UN Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Working with women only, through SACCOS, the program provides a platform for women to excel through shared learning and practice. It addresses the capacity-building needs of the targeted women (as rights-holders and agents of change) and provides them with credit and income-generating training. The program also supports ten rural SACCOS.

The key gender equality and women's empowerment indicators used in the program were: cognitive (knowledge and attitude), psychological (confidence and self-esteem), economic (incomes, assets, etc.) and political (decision-making & systems of inclusion). The program evaluation (Hando et al., 2018) revealed improvements in:

- women's control and management of household food reserves from 20.6% in 2015 to 66.8% in 2018;
- household food reserve management, due to the increased food supply from

- productivity gains and food reserve management training; and
- the use of technologies and farm inputs by beneficiary women.

Furthermore, it enabled vulnerable rural women to influence decisions affecting their lives at the household level and to participate in decision-making within rural institutions. They were able to earn their own income, create assets (such as by purchasing a goat or donkey and cart, or building a new house with the loan provided through the program), and change the living standard of the household. The program also helped to create a conducive policy and institutional environment, which is key in laying the foundation for gender equality and WEE.

Ethiopia has two types of **savings/cooperative groups**, both with a deep reach throughout the country.

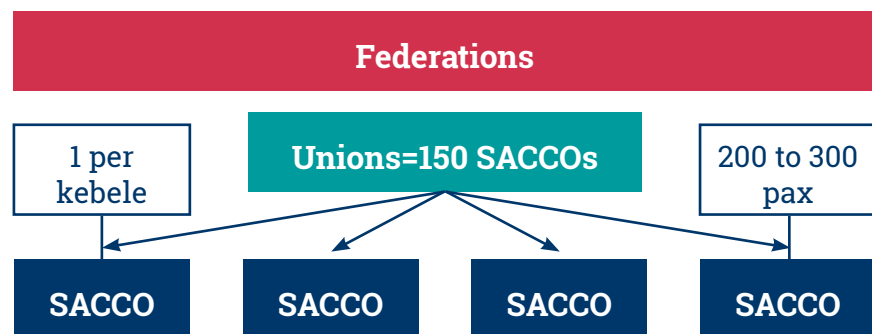
Figure 3 shows the cooperatives that are registered with the Ministry of Cooperatives and given formal credit through the Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE).

Figure 4 shows the **unregistered, community-based cooperatives**, which are usually supported by churches or NGOs.

Figure 3: Government-led and -registered cooperatives

Top down

Purpose is financial. All registered with the FCA. Liquidity comes from DBE to unions. Members buy shares. Some unions are with companies. FCA also has multi-purpose cooperatives (related to agriculture/business).

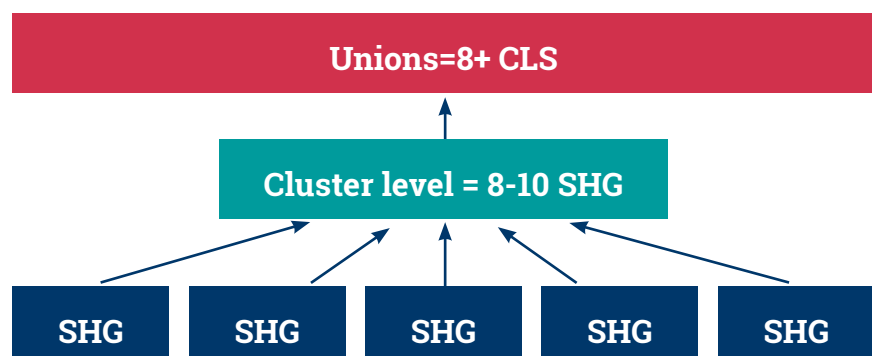


SACCOs 20,000 (89% rural) (4.3 million members, 41% women). Coops = 31.7% women. SACCO plus coops = 6.1 million females. SACCOs grow faster in membership and size than coops.

Figure 4: Informal self-help groups

Bottom up

Purpose is self-help, including community development and advocacy. Not registered. Liquidity comes from members' savings + loans. Demand driven. Some unions register with FCA to access more services and money.



All development programs/projects are in one way or another aligned and contribute to the government programs and policies. However, evaluation reports have specifically cited the following projects as complementary to government programs

120,000
women initially
planned to be
empowered between
2015 and 2020,
but only reached
72,000

to maximise impact: GRAD, ABDISHE, Agricultural Growth Program – Livestock Market Development, and W4W.

1. The strategic objective of the Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development project was to graduate at least 50,000 chronically food-insecure households from the Government of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) food support in 16 targeted *woredas* (districts), and to increase each household's income by \$365 by the activity's fifth year in 16 *woredas* of Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region.
2. ABDISHE ('her hope') project is designed to provide alternative and accelerated pathways towards graduation from the Government of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), the largest social safety net program in Africa so far providing food and cash transfers up to 7.9 million beneficiaries. ABDISHE follows market-driven approaches and contributes to improving the livelihoods of chronically food-insecure women mainly by helping them acquire assets through entry into viable markets and contextually relevant microfinance services. Thus, the project aligns with the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia to link PSNP beneficiaries to long-term development initiatives.
3. Agricultural Growth Program – Livestock Market Development (AGP-LMD) is focused on the highly productive areas of Ethiopia where smallholder farmers have the productive assets required for at least minimal commercial engagement. It also includes activities which target extremely poor and subsistence level households and selected food insecure *woredas* where the graduates of the PSNP reside.
4. The Women for Women project support is found to be consistent with and supportive of the country's Growth and Transformation Plan and strategies. The current, as well as the recently completed GTP, clearly emphasises the economic empowerment of women and youth through promoting micro and small enterprises. The Addis Ababa City Administration planned to economically empower 120,000 women in GTP II (2015-2020), but only reached 72,000 during the project's timeframe.

5.1 Program strategies for engaging and empowering women

An approach shared among these programs/projects is to reach women through collective action groups, such as village savings and loan associations (VSLA), village economic savings associations (VESAs), or self-help groups. These vehicles are frequently used in combination with a transformative training method (Drucza and Abebe, 2017). Yet, there are few evaluations that isolate the impacts of gender-focused components or help us understand which entry points work best.

Certain issues need attention before attributing success or failure to a specific project. Firstly, how should gender norms and attitude changes be assessed rigorously? Secondly, attribution is costly and difficult in a context like Ethiopia where multiple projects are running in parallel (Annex 2b). Thirdly, how narrowly or broadly should the definition of WEE be understood and assessed? Fourth, evaluators within Ethiopia require training on gender-responsive data collection and analysis methods, as many evaluations are not rigorous *and* are unable to capture gender norm changes (Springer and Drucza, 2017).

Despite a lack of robust evidence, we can observe a number of strategies employed by various projects and programs to enhance their reach and benefits to women. These include building upon existing networks that already provide a women's membership base; strengthening women's agency at the community level; and working on regional or sectoral clusters to maximize effectiveness.

Building on existing networks:

To reach the direct beneficiaries like rural women, chronically food insecure households, smallholder farmers, most vulnerable and poor women, or economically active but poor women etc., the projects either enter by targeting the entire community or village or by approaching collectives or groups like self-help groups (SHGs), VSLAs, VESAs, SACCOs, or women's agro-processing cooperatives.

Working with women self-help groups is quite common and popular in developing countries. Facilitating Access to Financial Services for Women Beekeepers in Ethiopia, implemented by Oxfam, and Developing Farmers Towards Food and Income Security (DeFar), implemented by Send a Cow, are examples of projects that targeted SHGs to achieve their goals. In addition, focused work at the household level was carried out by Send-A-Cow through the Transformative Household Methodology in which household members are led through a series of participatory exercises which helps to elicit information on perceptions on the division of labour and other inter-family relations.

CARE used VSLAs or VESAs as entry points to target beneficiaries. For example, its WE RISE, ABDISHE and Promoting Opportunities for Women's Economic Empowerment in Rural Africa (POWER Africa) projects relied on building and strengthening collectives, beginning with Ethiopian VSLAs to contribute to increasing women's knowledge and capacity as a pathway to increasing women's agricultural productivity and empowerment. The W4W project has played a key role in improving women's access to formal and informal financial services by organizing women into VSLAs and SACCOs, linking them to Addis Saving and Credit Institute and Addis Capital Goods Finance S.C., and preparing business plan competitions and granting capital for winners.. The GRAD project created VESAs to promote savings and access to loans. In the Purchase for Progress initiative by the World Food Programme, the idea of increasing women's participation and economic benefits and enhancing their leadership/management capacities is advanced by organizing them in both rural saving and credit cooperatives and primary cooperatives.

Sasakawa Global 2000 Ethiopia implemented the Women Empowerment Project (JPP1) and targeted nine women's agro-processing cooperatives in three regions; five of them in Oromia Region, two in Amhara Region and two in SNNPR. The Promoting Women's Economic Leadership in Market-Oriented Agriculture project was implemented with the purpose of empowering women smallholder farmers and improving their livelihoods through agro-processing technologies and capacity building interventions. Through the project, four women agro-processing cooperatives were established. The Strengthening the Ethiopian Agricultural Extension System project, designed by Oxfam and Sasakawa Africa Association, aimed to improve the productivity and production of smallholder farmers/pastoralists by strengthening the extension service delivery and its systems at selected pastoralist/farmer training centres in all regions of Ethiopia.

Using community-driven/ based development to create an enabling environment for WEE:

In 2003, Oxfam used an asset-based, community-driven development (ABCD) approach to determine if it was possible for outside organizations to stimulate genuine community-driven development, building on existing community assets: human, social, institutional, financial, natural, and physical. This approach creates space for women at the community level to adopt leadership roles; at the household level, it helps with equitable resource and workload sharing.

Working in clusters to improve women's productivity and competitiveness:

The Agricultural Growth Program – Livestock Market Development (AGP-LMD) project, implemented by Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture, used a "livestock growth corridor" or "milk shed" (cluster of *woredas*) approach to select intervention areas and targeted beneficiaries. AGP-LMD, in concert with the crop value chain program AGP-AMDe, serves as part of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) contribution to the Government of Ethiopia's Agricultural Growth Program. Its objective is to "foster growth and reduce poverty by improving the productivity and competitiveness of selected livestock value chains: dairy, meat and live animals". Given women's lack of mobility and the cultural diversity in Ethiopia, working with neighbouring communities can facilitate women's economic opportunity.

5.2 Program deficiencies in addressing WEE

All the programs mentioned in this document have either aimed to increase women's economic opportunities or to enhance WEE. Several program evaluation documents were disqualified because they did not mention women or gender in any substantive way. Several projects claimed an impact on WEE, and yet did not offer empirical proof. All the programs reviewed work independently from each other and lack synergy.

A number of programming deficiencies should be thought through in designing future interventions. These observations are based upon existing program evaluations and published evidence. There are a range of ongoing programs in Ethiopia (see box below for examples) that have been learning about WEE but have not yet had a formal evaluation. A practitioner workshop could be valuable in bringing together and documenting WEE issues that programs are currently working on, and grappling with and collating the (grey and unpublished) evidence that may exist on them.

WEE programs currently being implemented

Farm Africa sets up schemes to help women in remote areas manage their savings and credit so they can fund their own enterprises. They also offer business training and advice to build women's confidence so they can go on to play a bigger role in making decisions for their household and community. The Women Entrepreneurship Development Project provides finance and business support for growth-oriented women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia. The project is implemented by the Development Bank of Ethiopia and the Federal Agency for Urban Job Creation and is currently working with 12 participating microfinance institutions and a network of training providers across the country. As of March 2019, more than 12,000 women entrepreneurs took loans and over 16,000 participated in business training (The World Bank, 2019c).

Enterprise Partners is a DFID-funded program facilitating market development to create jobs and raise incomes of Ethiopians living with poverty, particularly women. It focuses on the following sectors: garments, leather, horticulture, financial inclusion, and increasing investment.

USAID, through its Feed the Future initiative, is working with the Government of Ethiopia to improve agricultural productivity and the commercialize smallholder farmers through an "inclusive value chain and market systems development strategy that integrates nutrition-sensitive interventions, climate-smart agriculture, and USAID/Ethiopia's push-pull strategy" (USAID, 2018, p.2). One component of this effort is the focus on gender equality, women's empowerment, and the positive development of youth. To this effect, Feed the Future's Value Chain Activities (FTF VCA) have implemented three WEE initiatives: the Transformative Household Methodology (THM), mentorships, and Gender and Youth Capacity Building with the Private Sector, in four regions of Ethiopia. THM aims to build understanding of and transform gender norms in households, creating opportunities for women and youth to engage in income-generating activities. The mentorships program connects successful agribusiness owners (90% female) to new entrepreneurs (75% female) to strengthen female-owned businesses in the agriculture sector. FTF VCA also works on inclusive market development by partnering with private sector actors to integrate gender and positive youth development plans into their long-term business goals.

Reach for Change helps female social entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and their social impact.

There are various other financial inclusion projects in Ethiopia. For example, IFAD has given a grant to the Ministry of Cooperatives and directed some of the funds to women-only cooperatives.

Weaknesses documented in program evaluations to date include:

Failure to undertake gender analysis in evaluating programs and projects

When trying to understand WEE, it is important to go beyond sex-disaggregated analysis and focus more on gender analysis. For example, we need to know whether increasing women's economic opportunities made any impact on their decision-making power over the money earned. This would also include assessing projects' impact on women's workloads. Diversification needs to monitor measures taken to prevent women being further burdened when engaging them with livelihood opportunities in addition to their household chores. Discussing women's time poverty is essential, but frequently missing. For example, in Oxfam's ABCD project, gender specific evaluation is missing. Some projects mentioned that meetings and trainings overburdened women.

Excluding men from gender equality work

Men should be involved in gender mainstreaming and strategies to sensitize men on WEE should be developed. Much of the inequality and discrimination women face is directly linked to their relations with men—particularly in terms of access to resources and decision-making. A clear distinction can be made between biological differences between women and men (sex) and differences and inequalities that are socially constructed and which can differ over time and in different contexts (gender). This can open the way for greater attention to men as well as women and to the relations between them. For example, in CARE's WE-RISE project, VSLA group participation exposed women and men to information about earning income as well as gender equality, and presented opportunities to learn new skills, such as saving and spending wisely and presenting their ideas in public. Such instances are missing in most of the programs/projects evaluated.

Failure to look beyond women's participation

Projects usually start with a target to be achieved and the end line evaluates whether that target has been reached. Projects target women and support their participation but rarely assess whether this participation alters or improves their social and community standing. For example, in the AGP-LMD project, the traditional roles of women in livestock production and marketing, and cultural norms regarding work responsibilities merit further consideration as factors that may influence rural women's participation in economic activities and leadership, and their access to and control over resources. While the substantive participation of women at market points, livestock collection grounds, milk collection centers and cooperative operations is steadily expanding, it remains relatively low. In addition, efforts are needed to specifically determine the impact of this emphasis on household income and nutrition.

A lack of clarity on women's empowerment and how to measure it

Projects use the term 'empowerment' quite loosely. It is sometimes equated with mobility, agency, nutrition, income, participation or well-being, or a mix. This makes comparison difficult and creates confusion as to what WEE actually is or should aim for. There is a related lack of indicators on WEE to match the overall intent of projects' theories of change. Projects generally don't build upon their own previous learnings or learn from other projects or programs to identify the most effective approaches to reach the target groups. And at the implementation stage, there is hardly any use of measures or approaches to understand the role of intersectionality.

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There is no consistent measurement tool used to assess WEE in Ethiopia. Different methodologies and tools are available from [the International Centre for Research on Women](#), the [OECD](#) and the [Donor Committee for Enterprise Development](#). There is also the International Food Policy Research Initiative's [Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index](#) and the [United Nations Foundation](#) road map and measurement guidance. Out of 25 programs/ projects shortlisted for review, only seven used a specific tool for measuring WEE (Table 5).

Table 5: WEE tools used in program/project evaluations

WEE Tools	Frequency of use
CARE's Gender Equality and Women's Voices	1
CARE's Women's Economic Empowerment	1
Women's Empowerment Index	1
Gender Parity Index	1
Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (adapted)	1
Evaluation Questions – OECD	2
Total	7

Failure to address underlying gender norms

The programs/projects don't emphasize shifting gender norms which are often the root cause of women's disempowerment. Changing attitudes (of the household, family, and community) is crucial. In addition to focusing on attitudes, program's need to increase knowledge (and awareness) about misleading gender norms and their impact.

5.3 Program stakeholders

Promoting WEE and women's economic opportunities are primarily the responsibility of the government. However, civil society, regional, and multilateral organizations play a crucial role in this process. They provide financial and non-financial resources to promote WEE and WEO. Effective national development policies, plans, and strategies depend not only on robust research and institutional capacity, but also on engagement between stakeholders at the national level to identify the priority challenges and the groups affected. However, the key challenge for donors and multilateral organizations is to ensure that gender is, and remains, a development priority. In general, donors and international organizations support the same priorities and implement parallel programs, sometimes with the same local partners and government bodies, with very little synergy between the interventions.

While reviewing the programs, a list was compiled, capturing the stakeholders in the Ethiopian context. These stakeholders have been categorized under four headings:

1. UN agencies
2. Funding agencies
3. Other bilateral and multilateral organizations/institutions, and NGOs
4. Government organizations

There are many private consulting firms and multinational firms implementing and evaluating development programs in Ethiopia that are not included in this list, including the reviewers. Given the poor-quality evidence outlined by Springer and Drucza (2018) it would be prudent to include consulting firms and other private players (e.g. manufacturers) to be part of the solution of improving and measuring

WEE. Moreover, there is a strong feminist organization, [Setaweet](#), which is rarely considered a key stakeholder but should be.

The government often specifies stakeholders per policy. However, it is not clear how these stakeholders are chosen. The stakeholders listed in policy documents often appears very different from those listed in the evaluations.

No single intervention at the national or local level can address the entire range of issues that constitute WEE. This renders engagement between relevant stakeholders critical for success. WEE/livelihood programs should aim to change the environment for women's economic engagement with a clear understanding by all stakeholders that there is no successful societal development without women's equal inclusion.



6. Entry points for future research

With a reform-minded government and strong growth, Ethiopia has an enabling environment for WEE. It is an opportune time to study the impact of policy changes on WEE. Many questions about WEE remain: what definition of WEE makes sense to the greatest number of Ethiopians? What sequencing and sub-components are needed to economically empower women? What needs to happen to entice gender policy implementation at the local level? If gender norms are a barrier, what is a realistic pace of change? At the same time, a future research agenda should study which current initiatives have had the greatest impact on WEE.

There are opportunities for GrOW East Africa to help address a range of research gaps, and to work with various stakeholders in addressing gaps in programming.



Research on workplace harassment was based on mostly international literature because there were very few Ethiopian studies conducted on the topic.

6.1 Research gaps and questions

Some of the difficulties of conducting research on WEO and WEE are associated with the lack of data available on certain WEE domains. Mezgebo, Ymesel and Tegene (2017) struggled to isolate the difficulties faced by female entrepreneurs in Ethiopia because of a lack of sex-disaggregated data on the topic. Similarly, Eyasu and Taa's (2019) research on workplace harassment was based on mostly international literature because there were very few Ethiopian studies conducted on the topic. While Mengistu (2019) was able to use the Ethiopian Demographic Health Survey (EDHS) to analyze factors affecting women's attitudes towards domestic violence, his analysis was limited by the narrow definition of WEE in the EDHS. There is a disproportionate amount of evidence on the barriers to WEE and less on the building blocks or pathways to WEE.

The following research questions remain to be explored (although this is not an exhaustive list):

Economic advancement

1. What is the prevailing theory of change of WEE?
2. What pathways lead to economic empowerment for which Ethiopian women?
3. What is an endogenous understanding of economic empowerment for Ethiopian women?
4. How much do social factors matter to economic achievements?
5. What rights do women lack that prevent them from being empowered economically?
6. What are the underlying causes of women's economic dis-empowerment?
7. Where (within markets, institutions, policies, communities, households, etc.,) are the critical barriers that are locking women out of:
 - a. Economic participation?
 - b. Achieving equitable returns?
 - c. Access and control?
 - d. Developing business acumen?

Power and agency

1. What are the good practices and approaches that improve intrahousehold relations and reduce women's workload in Ethiopia?
2. What does power and agency mean for women in the Ethiopian context?
3. What role do gender norms play in WEE? Is empowerment a norm?
4. How should men be involved in WEE? What is the role of men and boys in WEE?
5. In rural areas customs and traditions take precedence over legal institutions. To what extent are WEE programs adapting to local contexts?

Intersectionality and synergies

1. Are certain WEE domains more important than others for different wealth groups, regions, etc? How does intersectionality impact WEE?
2. Are the pathways towards economic empowerment very different from health, education and other pathways to empowerment?
3. How does the government work cross-sectorally and promote program linkages? How do these synergies contribute to WEE and how can they be exploited for enhanced effectiveness?

Operational features

1. To what extent and in what ways are women most commonly included in economic development programs?
2. What is the nature of interventions that create a positive impact on women and gender relations in societies?
3. What societal and institutional (structural) changes need to be made to enable WEE? What needs to change in society for women to be economically empowered?

... 'one-size fits all' interventions do not render results.

4. What are the risks in the current way WEE programming is done? What safeguarding is needed to ensure programs do no harm?
5. What influences the WEE focus of gender/women's policies?
6. How can we boost the regional uptake of WEE policies and programs?
7. How can the diffusion and adoption processes of successful programs be taken to scale?
8. How catalytic and powerful are certain interventions in advancing WEE and what sub-components are essential?

In terms of research methods, given the intersectional nature of gender inequality and other barriers facing women, future research should support mixed method studies that integrate gender and social lenses to investigate potential risks and other intersecting factors that may lead to competition, disharmony or exclusion.

6.2 Programming gaps that GrOW East Africa might address

Women's economic empowerment programs must include multiple and intersecting interventions that also address structural barriers that limit women's ability to enjoy their freedoms and benefit from their participation in productive work. Further, the interventions should be tailored to context and location-specific needs; intersectionality also plays an important role. As a result, 'one-size fits all' interventions do not render results. Based on the review of programs and policies related to WEE, along with the diverse definitions of WEE, GrOW can play a crucial role in bridging the gaps by focusing on:

Increased time poverty and unpaid care work

Women's increased participation in paid work does not automatically mean that the household responsibilities are redistributed among family members. Even in households where both men and women work for pay, women continue to perform more hours of unpaid labour. Additionally, the contribution of unpaid care or reproductive work is both substantial and essential, underpinning the economy through the maintenance of the current workforce and the nurturing of future workforces, while at the same time providing services essential to society's wellbeing. The government's planned national time-use survey on unpaid care and domestic work will help to address an important data gap that renders the value of this work invisible. However, because it is just as important to train stakeholders in the use of data as it is to gather it, there is an opportunity to provide assistance to bridge the gap between robust data collection and its effective use.

Segregation within the job market

Working in less regulated markets, support functions, and part-time jobs mean that women are typically paid less, are less likely to receive social protection coverage, such as social insurance or pensions, parental benefits, and sometimes are forced to work in precarious conditions. While various legal reforms have been enacted to address labour market segregation, such as barring discrimination in occupational categories and providing supports for better work life balance, work remains to be done in tackling prevailing cultural assumptions and gendered social norms that keep women trapped in informal, low-skilled, and low-paid or unpaid occupations.

Social protection and childcare

Inflexible work schedules and a lack of basic benefits such as maternity leave keep

many women from advancing economically whether they are factory workers or business managers.

Social norms

Underlying all discrimination are social norms—behaviours and attitudes that prescribe female behaviour and limit their potential. When a society disregards a woman's individual and inherent abilities based on predefined stereotypical beliefs, it hinders her ability to fulfil her potential.

Gender-based violence

Men may view women's economic gains as undermining their power and status and seek to retrieve power through violence or use violence and harassment to express their dissatisfaction with shifting gender roles and the visibility of women in the marketplace.



7. Conclusion

The Ethiopian government has expressed its commitment and support for WEE through the development of national policies, laws and frameworks that facilitate movement towards women's empowerment and gender equality. To accelerate the country's progress in achieving inclusive growth and equality for women, government leaders and development partners should incorporate gendered perspectives into all aspects of policy development and into all development interventions—from initial design and planning to monitoring, evaluation and learning. This would help meet multiple objectives and development outcomes, including those related to WEE, education, gender-based violence and aggregate economic growth. Greater synergies across sectors are needed.



GrOW East Africa can help to address these gaps and foster synergies by supporting research that:

Focusses on the **context** rather than individual women

Addresses discriminatory **social norms** and stereotypes

Recognizes the contribution of **unpaid care** or reproductive work

Addresses **labour market segregation**

Informs the follow-through from **policy to implementation**

Strengthens the design and **re-design of policies** and programs

Links **evidence** to policy and/or practices

Positions gender as a cross-cutting theme

Engages **men as allies** for WEE

Informs WEE considerations in Ethiopia's **COVID-19 response**

GrOW East Africa can help to address these gaps and foster synergies by supporting research that:

Focusses on the context rather than individual women: To date, interventions around WEE have focused primarily on equipping individual women with the skills and resources they need to compete in the marketplace—providing credit or training, for example—thus focusing on changing the individual woman rather than the context in which she is working. For example, even where women hold a land certificate or are informally acknowledged to control land, social norms dictate that they cannot plough the land themselves. Female-headed households are forced to sharecrop their land, which means they earn much less than households that have access to male labour. Therefore, alongside land tenure reform, other policy measures are needed to improve the returns to women's agricultural employment and enterprises (UN Women, 2015).

Addresses discriminatory social norms and stereotypes: The prevalence of discriminatory social norms undermines positive efforts in several areas of WEE, including employment, education, health, leadership, and property ownership. However, if policies are geared towards addressing non-discriminatory social norms, it becomes much easier for women to achieve economic empowerment.

Recognizes the contribution of unpaid care or reproductive work: Recognizing unpaid care in policies is crucial to ensuring the active participation of women in education, paid work, politics, leadership and several other spheres in which women and girls should equally and rightfully take part. Insufficient attention has been given to promoting the participation of men and boys in unpaid household work within the family. The calculation of unpaid care work in national statistics is a major gap that has not been addressed so far and has detrimental effects for women in particular during division of common property at the time of divorce or separation. Women's unpaid care work remains undervalued.

Addresses labour market segregation: Women workers dominate in labour-intensive, semi and low-skilled sub-sectors, primarily textiles, garments, leather, and agro-processing. ICT and electronics, and pharmaceutical manufacturing are the emerging sub-sectors that increasingly employ more women, especially on factory floors. The proportion of women workers in metal and engineering manufacturing appears to be disproportionately low, where women's participation in technical production is low or even zero. This is followed by chemical industries. Clear gender segregation is observed in different activities across value chains within each sub-sector as well. Cultural assumptions and gender relations seem to have more weight than the skill sets needed to perform the jobs in determining where in the value chain we tend to encounter women.

Informs the follow-through from policy to implementation: Political will to engage women in the economy appears in policy but the will to transform the cultural barriers and norms that prevent WEE is more sensitive. There is an urgent need to have this learning captured so it can influence the new national women's policy currently being reimagined. There is limited coordination and partnerships between intervening actors. Further, the scope of civil society advocacy or participation through bottom-up feedback structures is limited. While in theory some scope is provided for grassroots consultation through women's associations, in practice the structure is a top-down instrument (Bekana, 2019).

Strengthens the design and re-design of policies and programs: The policy development process must include the identification of policy gaps, assessment of existing and past policies, plus data collection to fill the data gaps and promote evidence-based policy development. This requires dialogue and discussion about previous policy and programming from a gender angle. More sex-disaggregated data that is analyzed by gender is needed to identify the building blocks of WEE.

The doorway to reform for WEE is open in Ethiopia but the pathway is imprecise and uncertain without more evidence.

This data should then be tracked to help address the existing gender norms that underpin inequalities, as well as help ensure equal participation and benefit to women from various development interventions. As the World Bank Group (2019b) suggests, policy should be informed by comprehensive analysis of the drivers and underlying causes of the gender gaps where the potential to close gender gaps in economic empowerment is greatest.

Links evidence to policy and/or practices: To answer the research question, “To what extent can the key organizations, policy intermediaries and stakeholders (including private sector actors) working on gender equality and WEE play an important role in linking evidence to policy and/or practice,” with any kind of rigor is impossible at the moment. Although national policies show strong commitment to promoting gender equality, there is still limited data on gender indicators. Quantitative data providing concrete evidence on gender relations—in terms of gender roles, access to assets and resources, and time use—are essential for the development of appropriate and effective economic and social policies at a national level.

Positions gender as a cross-cutting theme: Gender should be considered in each of the technical evaluation questions and not just siloed into a “gender section”. WEE specific outputs and outcomes should be stated at the design phase and collected at baseline. An understanding of the way economic opportunity is transformed into economic empowerment is essential.

Engages men as allies for WEE: Development practitioners need to gain men’s buy-in for, or reduce their resistance to, women’s active participation in groups, with both an awareness of local socio-cultural norms and clear arguments as to the benefits of change. Identifying supportive male leaders to act as advocates and successful female “role models” can help shift men’s attitudes.

Informs WEE considerations in Ethiopia’s COVID-19 response: The pandemic may set Ethiopia back on the WEE progress it has made thus far. Women who have stepped away from the labour market to provide unpaid care may slip into poverty. Teenage girls out of school, especially in rural areas, may never return to finish their studies. Gender equality goals that had previously been achieved may need to be revisited and strengthened via policy and program implementation in the wake of COVID-19.

This review has presented many ways to link policy and practice to strengthen WEE. The doorway to reform for WEE is open in Ethiopia but the pathway is imprecise and uncertain without more evidence.



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9. ANNEX

Review of regional and international gender related policies in Ethiopia



This annex provides an overview of the regional and international gender commitments in policies and conventions in Ethiopia.

Regional policies, conventions and legislations

The **Maputo Protocol**, which was signed in 2003 by 49 countries contains 23 articles that recognize the crucial role of women in the preservation of African values based on the principles of equality, peace, freedom, dignity, justice, solidarity and democracy. Only 40 countries have ratified the Maputo Protocol from 55 African Union (AU) Member States. Ethiopia signed the document in 2004 but has still not ratified it. One of the concerns blocking ratification is the perception that by promoting sexual and reproductive health rights for women the protocol is advocating for abortion and contraception use.

The **Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA)** was adopted by the AU during a meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2004 (Africa Union, 2004). The main objectives of the declaration are to accelerate the implementation of gender-specific economic, social and legal measures aimed at combating HIV/AIDS; ensure the full and effective participation and representation of women in the social, economic and political sector including engaging women in public campaigns against gender-based violence and trafficking of women; ensure active promotion and protection of all human rights for women and girls; promote the implementation of legislation to guarantee women's land, property and inheritance rights; and take specific measures to ensure the education of girls and literacy of women (Education for All goal). The objectives of the SDGEA reinforce the commitment of African states to international and regional women's rights instruments. Moreover, the Ethiopian government in power commits to reporting on any progress.

The **Africa Women's Decade (2010–2020)** plan was initiated by the AU Ministers for Gender and Women Affairs and was adopted in 2009 by the AU 12th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was done to accelerate progress towards the goals articulated in various declarations, protocols and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment adopted by the AU. Ten thematic areas were identified with a plan to focus on one per year. The overall theme was to advocate for a 'Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)'. The aim of AWD is to accelerate commitments made to achieve gender equality by being inclusive of both top-down and bottom-



up approaches that take into consideration grassroot level participation of women. This served as a guiding tool in Ethiopia as the voices of many village women were recorded and considered during the second GTP II development.

In 2015, the AU adopted **Agenda 2063**, as a 'blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future' (African Union, n.d.). By reaffirming the goal of inclusion and sustainable development, Agenda 2063 offers a pan-African vision for the economic growth and development of the continent. The 'Seven Aspirations' for the future are: (1) a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development; (2) an integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's renaissance; (3) an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law; (4) a peaceful and secure Africa; (5) an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics; (6) an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children; and (7) Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner.⁶ In the first 10 years of the implementation plan (2014–2023) the goal of achieving full gender equality in all spheres of life was structured by envisaging actions aimed at improving women's empowerment and tackling violence and discrimination against women and girls.

9.1 International policies, conventions and legislations

Ethiopia has ratified a number of international and regional policies, conventions and legislation on gender equality and women's empowerment. Ethiopia ratified **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** in 1980. In 2011, the CEDAW committee appreciated the Ethiopian efforts to implement the CEDAW policy, but stressed the necessity to challenge the root causes that perpetuate discrimination in the country, describing these as 'adverse cultural norms, practices and traditions as well as patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in all spheres of life' (CEDAW, 2011).

⁶ <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/aspirations>



Ethiopia signed **The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPA)** without any reservations, paving the way for the acceptance of all the provisions included in the document. Following the signing of this declaration, the former Ministry of Women, Children and Youth⁷ (MoWCY) decided to focus its efforts and resources specifically in several priority areas: poverty and economic empowerment of women and girls, education and training of women and girls, reproductive rights, health and HIV/AIDS, human rights, ending violence against women, empowering decision-making, and environment and institutional mechanisms in accordance with the existing policies focused on women's inclusion and gender equality. These priorities are mirrored in the National Action Plan on Gender Equality developed by the MoWCY in order to ensure gender-equitable development (Mulugeta, n.d.).

The **UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** were adopted by Ethiopia in 2000. The MDGs aimed to reduce extreme poverty, halt the spread of HIV/AIDS and provide universal primary education. Ethiopia made good progress towards the MDGs, especially in terms of health: a 67% reduction in mortality rates for children under the age of five and a 71% decline in maternal mortality (Assefa et al., 2017). However, goal three on gender was not met.

The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)** has a dedicated goal for gender (5) which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. After signing on to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs in 2015, the GoE aligned the Second Growth and Transformation plan (GTP II) to the SDGs. Ethiopia has also participated in the 2017 Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the SDGs that assessed the level to which the SDGs have been mainstreamed into development plans. According to the VNR, SDGs, women and youth policies and development packages have been prepared and implemented to support women's rights in all sectors, to give rural women access to social services and to increase women's decision-making opportunities' (National Planning Commission, 2017). These efforts, aiming to achieve SDG 5 focus on ensuring land access for rural women, providing financial services and trainings related to enhancing entrepreneurial skills, and implementing affirmative action policies geared towards women. There remains a wide gap between men and women with respect to technology. According to the Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (2016) only 27% of women own a mobile phone as compared to 54% of men. Similarly, 26% of men use a bank account, while only 15% of women do the same. Overall, some progress has been made towards SDG 5, especially in terms of aligning SDG indicators with national policies. However, it seems the final frontier is aligning cultural traditions and gender norms with these policies.

International Labour Conventions

The GoE has signed the following international labour conventions that protect women's rights as workers:

- C100 Equal Remuneration, which guarantees equal remuneration and calls for ending workplace discrimination;
- C111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), which promotes the rights of working women; and
- C156 Workers with Family Responsibilities, which promotes equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women workers.

7 Formerly the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA).

Annex 2a: Complete list of programs/projects reviewed

	Projects	Duration	Type of document available
1	Asset-Based Community-Driven Development Approach	2003-2011	Final internal evaluation report, 2013
2	Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative		No evaluation document available
3	Toward Economic and Sexual Reproductive Health Outcomes for Adolescent Girls (TESFA)	2010-2013	Investigative research, 2013
4	Facilitating access to financial services for women beekeepers in Ethiopia	2010-2013	Effectiveness Review Series, 2014
5	Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development	2011-2016	Final Performance Evaluation, 2017
6	Agricultural Growth Programme – Agribusiness Marketing and Development Project (AMDe)	2011-2016	Mid-Term Evaluation Report, 2015
7	Empowering the New Generation to Improve Nutrition and Economic opportunities (ENGINE)	2011-2016	External Mid-Term Performance Evaluation Report, 2014
8	Developing Farmers Towards Food and Income Security (DeFar)	2012-2015	Final Report, 2015
9	Women's Empowerment: Improving Resilience, Income and Food Security (WE-RISE)	2012-2016	Endline evaluation report, 2016
10	Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA)	2012-2016	External Evaluation of Sasakawa Africa Association Programs in Ethiopia Over the Strategic Plan: 2012 – 2016, Final report
11	Strengthening Ethiopian Agricultural Extension System (SEAES) Project		Endline evaluation report, 2015
12	Agricultural Growth Program – Livestock Market Development (AGP-LMD)	2012-2017	Mid-term evaluation, 2015
13	Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement and Market Expansion (PRIME)	2012-2017	Mid-term evaluation report, 2015
14	Abdishe project	2013-2016	Endline evaluation report, 2016
15	POWER (Promoting Opportunities for Women's Economic Empowerment in Rural Africa)	2014-2018	Mid-term evaluation, 2016
16	Women for Women (W4W) project	2015-18	Endline evaluation report, 2018
17	Productive Safety Nets Programme (4 phases)	2005-2020	No evaluation document available
18	Social Cash Transfer (SCT)	2005-2011	Evaluation report, 2012
19	Leave No Women Behind (LNWB)	2009-2013	Final Evaluation, 2013
20	Joint Programme On Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE) In Ethiopia	2014-2018	End Evaluation Report, 2018
21	Pastoral Community Development Project (Phase I)	2004-2009	No evaluation document available
22	Pastoral Community Development Project (Phase II)	2010-2015	Project Performance Assessment, 2016
23	Rural Finance Intermediation Programme (RUFIP I)	2003-2010	Interim Evaluation, 2011
24	Rural Finance Intermediation Programme (RUFIP II)	2012-2019	Supervision report, 2013
25	Participatory Small-scale Irrigation Development Programme (PASIDP)	2008-2015	Impact Assessment, 2019

Annex 2b:

9.2 Summary Tables for Women's Economic Empowerment Program, Project and Policy Landscape ^[1] (Programs and Policies in Ethiopia)

Policy, Program, and/or Intervention	Geographic Reach	Target Groups	Themes	Implementation Capacity and Intensity	Intended Outcomes	Level of Effectiveness
Programs/projects						
ABDISHE ('her hope') project	Oromia	Chronically food insecure women and their households	Collective action and skill development	<p>-The project was implemented within the limits of planned financial, human and material resources.</p> <p>-Followed the time plan.</p>	<p>Increase women and men's equal access to the knowledge, skills and services needed to strengthen and diversify their economic activities.</p> <p>Improvements in gender equity.</p>	50% of women and men reported access to the knowledge, skills and services needed.
Agricultural Growth Programme – Agribusiness Marketing and Development Project (AMDe)	Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, and Tigray	Smallholder farmers (men and women)	Skill development	<p>AMDe has performed well and has the potential to achieve "high performance" over time. This is impressive, within the relatively short period of implementation and Ethiopia's diverse and complex agro-ecology, farming systems, and agriculture sector, institutional and policy environment. However, AMDe staff has wasted considerable time and resources monitoring and reporting on rather irrelevant indicators, e.g., gross margins per hectare, value of incremental sales, and number of hectares under improved management.</p>	<p>AMDe has performed well and has the potential to achieve "high performance" over time. This is impressive, within the relatively short period of implementation and Ethiopia's diverse and complex agro-ecology, farming systems, and agriculture sector, institutional and policy environment. However, AMDe staff has wasted considerable time and resources monitoring and reporting on rather irrelevant indicators, e.g., gross margins per hectare, value of incremental sales, and number of hectares under improved management.</p>	<p>The project has been effective in launching Women in Agribusiness Leadership Network (WALN) to offer business development training—negotiation, marketing, networking, financial planning, and communication skills—leadership training, mentoring and coaching support, and networking opportunities for women leaders operating in Ethiopia's agribusiness sub-sector.</p>
Agricultural Growth Program – Livestock Market Development (AGP-LMD) project	62 <i>woredas</i> (46 AGP <i>woredas</i> and 16 non-AGP <i>woredas</i>) in Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR)	Farmers in the 7 main livestock growth corridors and milk shed areas	Collective action and skill development	<p>The grants program is designed to leverage large-scale private investment, particularly processing capacity, in the livestock value chains. But the grant process is incredibly cumbersome, and the current rate of expenditure makes it unlikely that the program will contribute substantially to the achievement of project goals during the LOP.</p>	<p>Increase women entrepreneurship and leadership development.</p>	<p>AGP-LMD capacity building activities routinely record 30-40% women participation, and has organized special training in business and leadership for women entrepreneurs. The project also emphasizes women's participation in the grants program, with funds set aside specifically for women entrepreneurs.</p>

Policy, Program, and/or Intervention	Geographic Reach	Target Groups	Themes	Implementation Capacity and Intensity	Intended Outcomes	Level of Effectiveness
Asset-Based Community-Driven Development Approach	Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, and Tigray	Communities (men and women)	Collective action, property and asset, and skill development	n/a	To build awareness and facilitate the use of existing assets and opportunities.	<p>The project has been moderately effective in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increasing participation of women. -Improving relationships between men and women, more equal opportunities to actively participate in development activities, and a more equal division of labour at the household level. -Helped grow the assets and potential for the future. <p>However, gender specific impact of the collective action, asset ownership and skill development are unclear from the report.</p>
Developing Farmers Towards Food and Income Security (DeFar)	SNNPR	Poor small holder farmers	Collective action and skill development	Efficient in utilizing the capacities and resources to organize training and monitoring of program inputs, training and follow-up of program inputs. Day-to-day management, outputs achieved at the end of project, cost effectiveness, monitoring, project partners, quality of processes followed at the community level as well as keeping the link between the communities through site visits and organization of shared learning experiences.	Increased social cohesion and trust amongst community members, gender impact/ changes in access to resources and skills for women and girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Group members are getting used to work together on the basis of mutual cooperation extending beyond their immediate kinship or other common social networks. -Farmers were actively involved in choosing different trainings that were being initiated and were able to quickly use this to improve their holdings, sow crops and begin to enter the market.

Policy, Program, and/or Intervention	Geographic Reach	Target Groups	Themes	Implementation Capacity and Intensity	Intended Outcomes	Level of Effectiveness
Facilitating access to financial services for women beekeepers in Ethiopia	Seven <i>woredas</i> (districts) in Amhara	Women's self-help groups	Property and asset, collective action, labour market segregation, unpaid care	The project was originally intended to have a larger budget and to allow for a more intense package of advice and support to be provided to SHG members. Once it was clear that the planned budget was not available, it would perhaps have been more effective to have reduced the scale of the project in order to provide concentrated support to a smaller number of self-help groups, rather than a less comprehensive package for a greater number.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -SHGs to act as a vehicle to promote women's involvement in other community-level institutions and in cooperatives; to act as a forum for sharing experience and taking collective action, with the aim of building self-confidence, time management and having women's roles more recognised at the community level. -To improve links to cooperatives and marketing channels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No indication of an effect from the project on an index of indicators of material wealth, such as housing conditions and ownership of assets. -There is a clear impact on women's participation in community groups. However, the SHG members lack ownership of the income generating activities or control over the income generated. -Efforts to improve links to cooperatives and marketing channels appear to have been successful.
Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development	Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, and Tigray	Chronically food insecure households	Collective Action, labour market segregation	n/a	<p>Technical value chain advice to take advantage of diversified livelihood opportunities.</p> <p>-Enrolment and use of the VESAs were widespread, and reports of participants' experiences with the VESAs were positive. The training and increased knowledge were considered the most valuable part of the VESAs.</p> <p>-Farmers' Economic and Market Associations (FEMAs) were spoken of positively but were never major suppliers of inputs or channels of marketing. Some exceptional FEMAs made the transition to cooperatives.</p> <p>-GRAD's micro-franchising and agro-dealer innovations both appeared to be effective at increasing incomes and access to agriculture inputs.</p> <p>-GRAD households on average appeared to increase their income by the targeted \$1 per day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Though GRAD did not achieve its target of 50,000 graduated households, it made substantial progress: the 39,306 households that graduated constitute 78.6 percent of this target.

Policy, Program, and/or Intervention	Geographic Reach	Target Groups	Themes	Implementation Capacity and Intensity	Intended Outcomes	Level of Effectiveness
Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment in Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Rural women	Labor market segregation	The JP was efficient in the use and transfer of funds. The use of reduced recurrent cost, timely and responsive programming approach strengthened the JP's efficiency. Reaching more than the planned number of beneficiaries with the same resource confirmed the JP's efficient approach. The use of different M&E mechanisms improved coordination and collaboration among stakeholders though there was limitation in the flow of information among regional and federal level stakeholders.	The knowledge and technical skills support to improve the life skills (such as numeracy skills, reading and writing, financial literacy, mobile phones and saving information, etc.) of the beneficiary women and facilitate their access to productive resources.	<p>-Training was provided on marketing, including export opportunities of high value crops. Women also got the opportunity to be involved in bazaars, conferences and exhibitions. About 20 women leaders from the two regions and 36 women members from the Oromia Region travelled to the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region for experience sharing.</p> <p>-Eighty-one percent of 2500 rural women (92 percent in Oromia and 33.2 percent in Afar) benefited from gender-sensitive non-financial services such as organizing women under cooperatives (in Afar region) provision of women friendly technologies, business development services, business skill training, cooperatives management training, and training on agronomic practices.</p>
Leave no Woman Behind (LNWB)	Tigray and Amhara Region	Women and girls	Skill development	Shared decision making and consultation processes were evident at all levels of the programme while transparency in resource allocation and decisions on financial expenditures helped to strengthen programme credibility and ownership. However, delayed fund releases, liquidation, and reporting continued to be challenging for the programme.	Regional Efforts to strategically address gender disparities in literacy and educational attainment.	<p>-Literacy and life skills education increased the capacity to understand and practically apply the learning in other fields such as agriculture, environment management, and response to rights violations such as child marriage, GBV, HTPs.</p> <p>-Enabled women to better manage and keep a record of the credit and the income from their investments.</p> <p>-Increased productivity at household level and increased household income.</p>

Policy, Program, and/or Intervention	Geographic Reach	Target Groups	Themes	Implementation Capacity and Intensity	Intended Outcomes	Level of Effectiveness
Promoting Opportunities for Women's Economic Empowerment in Rural Africa (POWER Africa)	Oromia	Most vulnerable and poor women and adolescent girls	Collective action	The project is using the experience and expertise of POWER/AFRICA in one country (Côte d'Ivoire) to help implement and improve the VA and VAN settings in other countries. The monitoring structure of a regional office with the four country offices, along with the annual learning events (ALEs) help foster this allocation of human capital resources. Finally, where it did not have the expertise, the project brought in support from the exterior under the form of FSP expert consultants and hiring linkage experts to support the need to create and facilitate linkages.	To increase the provision of financial literacy and other skill training to VSLA members.	The program directs a proportion of its resources at the formation of new VSLAs as part of a broader FI programming strategy. For Burundi, Ethiopia and Côte d'Ivoire, VSLA members have felt their participation has made them feel more self-confident and capable.
Social Cash Transfer (SCT)	Tigray region	Physically disabled people (especially older people), orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), single mothers, sick and permanently disabled people, PLHIVs and adolescent girls.	Labour market segregation	The social cash transfer delivery mechanism lacked efficiency in terms of timeliness, market linkages, and monitoring, evaluation, providing required data to the evaluators, and maintaining repayment rates at par to MFIs.	To improve the livelihood of the poor and contributing to poverty reduction in their households.	<p>-The scheme is highly effective to bring about a changes in the lives of women, children and the participating households in terms of food, nutrition, health, education, clothing, family income, asset base, HIV risk reduction, care of the PLHIVs and engagement in self-employment.</p> <p>-The scheme also made meaningful contributions to the social inclusion of beneficiaries especially to their inclusion in community based iddir²⁰ groups from which they were excluded in the past due to their inability to pay the membership fee.</p>

Policy, Program, and/or Intervention	Geographic Reach	Target Groups	Themes	Implementation Capacity and Intensity	Intended Outcomes	Level of Effectiveness
Strengthening Ethiopian Agricultural Extension System (SEAES) Project	Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Tigray and Dire Dawa Administrative Council	Smallholders and pastoralists	Collective Action	Despite some delays in implementation of the project activities at the initial stage of the project, the project activities have been implemented efficiently.	Improve farmers' livelihood through increased productivity and incomes by strengthening a set of 215 pilot Peasant/Farmer Training Center (P/FTCs) in a sustainable manner.	<p>-The project established women's groups and provided seed money for individually operated farm business depending on the interest of the women.</p> <p>-Enabled women to generate income, attend meetings with the group members, promoted saving and investment in live animals, which reproduced creating asset base for the women.</p> <p>-Helped to build women's confidence in their ability to impact their own futures, empowered them to engage in economic and social issues, and helped change the mindset of men about women's economic and social contributions.</p>
WE-RISE project	Sidama zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR)	Chronically food insecure rural women (CFIRW)	Collective action, property and assets	The project failed to spend the money allocated in the budget for project activities during the initial two years, severely hindering WE RISE progress toward meeting the goals, objectives and outcome indicators used to measure the effect and impact of the project implementation strategy. SOS Sahel and CARE have managed to turn around the weaknesses identified at the midterm point of the project in remarkable fashion.	To increase institutional capacity for improved gender-equitable programming.	<p>WE RISE VSLA participating members have increased their skills, knowledge, and confidence, thereby improving participating women's agency.</p> <p>WE RISE households have markedly increased - their asset holdings; all household asset values increased by nearly fifty percent - asset ownership of cell phones and farm as well as non-farm business equipment - savings and loan access.</p>

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Women for Women (W4W) project	Addis (Arada, Lideta and Kirkos)	Economically active but poor women	Collective Action, labour market segregation, unpaid care work	n/a	Balance between women's productive task and leisure.	The project made a 7% contribution to the achievement of the city's GTP II awareness creation plan of the year by organizing 5,000 women who gained access to knowledge and basic skills on business development and other life-skills trainings, through which they are economically and socially empowered. In addition, the project had a significant contribution in improving women's access to financial services through establishing 182 Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) and 6 SACCOs that benefited 3,875 women.
Policies						
Educational and Training Policy, 1994	Ethiopia	Women & girls	n/a	The implementation capacity of the Ministry of Education is high because it received a specific target concerning female students along with a budget. However, the intensity is limited because unless the ministry works with other institutions on issues such as child marriage and gender discrimination in higher education its capacity is limited	Ensure that women are provided an opportunity to enrol in the education sector as staff as well as students	The level of effectiveness has been from low to moderate in providing equal opportunities to women in education and training.
Ethiopian women development and change package, 2006	Ethiopia	Women and girls	Property and asset, unpaid care, labour market segregation, collective action	Women are expected to benefit from the government's affirmative action initiatives that work towards gender equality. They are implemented effectively, but there is controversy amongst the implementors on the approach itself. There is controversy among implementers on the importance of affirmative and the positive impact of affirmative actions on women's achievements.	Ensuring women get access to training opportunities, access to improved technologies, strengthening women's associations and social services through their right to affirmative action to help eradicate women's sense of inferiority and enhance gender equality.	<p>-There has been a failure to address the underlying gender norms that cause inequality in control of assets and property.</p> <p>-Unless mindful interventions made along with income generating activities to alleviate women's workload, the income generating activities further impose more workload on women.</p> <p>-Most of women's associations are weak and even women scholars' associations, who could be more influential are not engaged in activities that aim to change the overall condition of women.</p>

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Ethiopian women development and change package, 2017	Ethiopia	Urban women	Labour market segregation	There is poor coordination between employers and trainers to ensure that women get the required skill and knowledge for better employment.	Ensure women's participation and benefit of urban women in education	Though women are expected to be benefit from the government initiatives towards gender equality, they are still in a disadvantage position due to prevalent deep-rooted gender inequality and poverty.
Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II), 2016	Ethiopia	Women & girls, youth	Labour market segregation	n/a	Enhanced women's employment in medium & small manufacturing industries (textile, garment, leather, food & beverages).	The effectiveness of the policy is moderate.
National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE), 2006	Ethiopia	-Women, girls, men -Urban and rural women -Women with disability	Unpaid Care Work, Skill Development, Property and Assets, Social Protection, and labour market segregation.	Requires the coordination of several government agencies including MOWA, MoLSA MoARD, MoFED, MoFA, MoTI, MoE, Land Administration other ministries. As a government wide effort, the implementation capacity is high in terms of resources but may be ineffective as a result of the high coordination needed.	Promote women's participation in developing economic policies and managing the economy and promote equal access and success in education and training, economic resources for women and girls, reduce workload.	It is estimated that the effectiveness of the policy in promoting women's participation is low-medium. However, the effect of the policy itself has not been assessed.

Policy, Program, and/or Intervention	Geographic Reach	Target Groups	Themes	Implementation Capacity and Intensity	Intended Outcomes	Level of Effectiveness
National Strategy and Action plan on Harmful traditional practices (HTPs) against women and children in Ethiopia, 2013	Ethiopia	Women and girls	n/a	n/a	Support the preventive and responsive activities of HTPs operated at the grass roots level to build institutional mechanisms for an integrated response, enhancing the capacity of service providing institutions (both formal and informal), expanding the scale and range of services using a multi-sectoral approach.	It has successfully provided rehabilitative services and support to women and children affected by harmful traditional practices, focusing on all vulnerable groups and victims of HTPs. However, preventing HTPs requires gender norm changes that require greater cohesiveness between the law and traditions.
The Health Policy, 1993	Ethiopia	Women and girls	n/a	n/a	<p>Improve community awareness and community mobilization for better understanding of HTP impacts, and to bring about behaviour change in communities can address HTPs against women effectively.</p> <p>Ensuring that women victims of physical, sexual and physiological abuse are provided appropriate supports and that they get medical support to recover from the trauma.</p>	<p>The consecutive developing programs that complement gender specific policies can help for effective implementation of policies towards achieving the intended effect. The five consecutive Health Sector Development Programmes (HSDPs) between 1997 and 2015 as HSDP-I, HSDP-II, HSDP-III, HSDP-IV and HSDP-V and deploying the female extension workers contributed to the effectiveness of the 1993 Health Policy.</p>
The National Policy on Ethiopian Women, 1993	Ethiopia	Women and girls	Unpaid care work, labour market segregation	There is no coordination among specific programs, projects and interventions while providing technical, and vocational training to women in line with the policy that could help to identify policy gaps and ways to enhance the policy efficiency.	Ensuring women's technical proficiency, self-confidence, reduced workload.	<p>The infrastructure necessary to implement this policy was not present at the time this policy was undertaken.</p> <p>The extent of equal opportunities to women's employment, pay, promotion and appointment are given in each government and NGOs need to be researched further as there is little data on women's working conditions.</p>

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Guidelines for gender mainstreaming, 2010	Ethiopia	Women and girls	Unpaid care work, collective action, and labour market segregation	MoWA (now MoWCY) did not have a mandate to hold any other ministries accountable for gender mainstreaming. Thus, these guidelines were mere suggestions.	To provide a reference framework for all government and non-government partners and suggest technical approaches to promoting equal participation in and benefiting from development activities for men and women.	MoWA was not able to enforce any of these guidelines.
Land Use Proclamation No 456/2005	Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Tigray	Women	Labour market segregation	The land administration had the means and the mandate to achieve its objective.	Women who want to engage in agriculture shall have the right to own and use rural land.	The number of women who own property has increased by 47% but they were not able to do so in Tigray.

The iddirs are the community based organizations (CBOs) formed at local level to support member households during funeral/burial ceremonies that require huge expenditures in Ethiopian social settings

